

## Travel Tips from Safe Kids Columbus to Ensure Safety Stays a Top Priority

### Plan Ahead When Traveling by Car or Plane, Regardless of the Distance

**Columbus, GA** – To many children, summer means one thing – vacation! Having fun while traveling is important, whether you go to Disneyland or Grandma’s house, but planning ahead to ensure safe travels should be a top priority for all parents.

“If your vacation includes a stay at a relative or friend’s, make sure you plan ahead and talk to your host about the possibility of installing age-appropriate safety devices such as cabinet locks or outlet covers to prevent injuries to your kids,” says Christy Hubbard, Safe Kids Columbus coordinator. “This is especially true when visiting people whose children have already grown or those without children, as safety devices may be out-of-date or nonexistent.”

When traveling by car, always bring your child’s car seat or booster seat. Babies should be kept rear-facing for as long as their car seat allows, usually to about age 2 and 30 pounds – but at least until age 1 and 20 pounds – and a forward-facing car seat can protect older toddlers up to 40 pounds or more depending on the weight limit for the harness. Safe Kids coalitions around the country hold child safety seat check-up events where certified child passenger technicians teach parents about proper installation and car seat safety. Visit [www.safekidscolumbusga.com](http://www.safekidscolumbusga.com) for information about the Inspection Station in Columbus, GA. “Every time you get in your car, it is important to make sure all occupants are buckled appropriately and secure all loose items so that they don’t become projectiles in case of a sudden stop or crash,” Hubbard says.

When traveling by airplane, Safe Kids Columbus and the Federal Aviation Administration strongly recommend using a car seat. Infants and toddlers are safest in an approved car seat with a harness, in case of turbulence. “A child who rides in a car seat on the ground should ride in that car seat on a plane,” says Hubbard. “While most car seats can fit on standard airplane seats, make sure your child’s car seat is labeled ‘certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft.’”

Children who have outgrown car seats should sit directly on the airplane seat and, like all passengers, keep the lap belt buckled across their thighs or hips. Booster seats cannot be used on airplanes, because they require shoulder belts and airplane seats have only lap belts.

Planning ahead also involves packing appropriate gear for your children. If they will be biking, riding a scooter, rollerblading, skateboarding, etc, make sure to pack a helmet that is appropriate for the activity and fits them properly. If you have a baby and the trip involves staying overnight, bring your own folding playpen if possible, rather than relying on borrowed cribs. In several surveys from 2001-2006, Safe Kids Worldwide found many hotel-issued cribs to be defective, damaged or even recalled from the market.

“If you must use a hotel’s crib,” says Christy Hubbard, “inspect it carefully for broken or missing parts and look up the model on [www.Recalls.gov](http://www.Recalls.gov) to make sure it isn’t subject to any safety notices.”

For more information about child passenger safety on airplanes, visit the “Flying with Children” page at [www.faa.gov/passengers](http://www.faa.gov/passengers). For information about car seats and child passenger safety in general, visit [www.usa.safekids.org/skbu](http://www.usa.safekids.org/skbu). For information about crib safety, visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at 800-638-2772 or [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

*For more information about your local coalition activities, visit [www.safekidscolumbusga.com](http://www.safekidscolumbusga.com). Safe Kids Columbus works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Its members include public safety agencies, teachers, EMTs, county commissioners, health educators, nurses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, public health organizations, local government, and many others concerned about the well being of our children. Safe Kids Columbus is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Columbus was founded in 1998 and is led by the Columbus Health Department.*

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