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San Joaquin County Public Health Services' Safe Kids Coalition Awarded $250,000.00 Grant for Child Safety Seat Education Program

Stockton, CA (October 27, 2026) – San Joaquin County Public Health Services' Safe Kids Coalition was awarded a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to support child passenger safety education for parents and caregivers, so every child travels safely.

"We are delighted to receive this grant to continue supporting our child safety program," said Rachel Zerbo, Supervising Public Health Educator with San Joaquin County Public Health Services. "With nearly 60% of car seats used incorrectly, hands-on education and support from certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians can make a meaningful difference. Through car seat inspections, education classes, community events, and access to no-cost car seats for eligible families, our goal is to help every parent and caregiver feel confident that their child is riding as safely as possible."

Changes to California's child passenger safety law take effect January 1, 2027. Under current California law, children under age eight must be properly secured in an appropriate car seat or booster seat in the back seat, unless they are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall. Beginning January 1, 2027, Assembly Bill 435 (AB 435) will incorporate the 5-Step Test to help determine whether children can be properly restrained by a vehicle seat belt.

Grant funds will be used to provide education through a variety of community events, classes, distribution of child safety seats to families in need and training new child passenger safety technicians.

The car seat safety program includes:

- Free child safety seat check-up events and education classes. To schedule a class, visit Child Passenger Safety Program
- Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) training and continuing education courses.
- Car seat installation assistance and free child safety seats for families in need.
- Partnering with local organizations on car seat safety community events in areas most impacted by improper or lack of child safety seat restraints.
- Participating in National Child Passenger Safety Week and National Heatstroke Prevention Day

"Keeping children as safe as possible inside the vehicle is our top priority," OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty said. "By investing in programs that help families learn how to use car seats and boosters properly, we're giving parents and caregivers the knowledge and peace of mind that their children are riding safely."

According to Renee Sunseri, Director of San Joaquin County Public Health Services, “This OTS grant is critical to continuing our passenger safety education efforts in the county, as well as providing car seats for families in need. We are very happy to partner with them in continuing this important work.”

The grant program runs through September 2027.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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