

## **New Parent Car Seat Education: Tips for Technicians**

### **What is the best way to reach new parents?**

There is no one way. Many programs provide presentations to parents as they access pre-natal care through new parent classes at clinics and hospitals, as well as offering specific car seat programs for new parents in the community. Some programs use incentives (money or a car seat) if a parent attends the class. It can be difficult to get families to come to classes, and a program may often miss key players, such as fathers and other related family members who may not attend a class.

Some hospitals have developed programs to identify families when the baby is born and provide the car seat education one-on-one to the parent(s) and/or family while they are still in the hospital.

### **Examples of some Colorado new parent education programs:**

- Expectant parent classes
  - OB nurses provide baby delivery classes for expectant parents. As part of the curriculum, child passenger safety is the topic for one session.
- Daddy Boot Camp
  - One intercultural resource center does a series of classes for new fathers. Child passenger safety is the topic for one of the sessions.
- Public Health Departments
  - Occasionally, vouchers are given to needy parents for safety seats. In order for parents to receive the voucher, they are required to attend a class on child passenger safety. These programs are limited to one safety seat per family/per year.

### **Should we distribute free car seats?**

There is no such thing as a free car seat; some person or agency paid for each seat. Some programs charge a minimum amount for each car seat they provide. Some programs ask for \$10 to \$25 for each car seat. And some programs provide a free seat if the parents are receiving some type of public assistance or state they are not able to pay. But others require a set payment for each seat. If you are considering providing free seats for those not able to afford one, consider requiring an educational class or volunteer work for the seat.

It is important to be very clear about the cost of the seats, so parents don't show up at a class or inspection station expecting a free car seat.

### **How much child passenger safety information do I give a busy, new parent?**

Parents are overwhelmed and generally can only handle information about the new baby. Most programs do recommend that the car seat education include some basic information on "the next step" in car seat protection, which generally means when to turn the baby around to forward facing. This can be provided in a very simple way.

Some programs stress that parents should come back to another inspection station when they transition their child to the next type of car seat.