

Activity/Lesson #1 – Soft Tummies, Strong Bones

OVERVIEW: The purpose of this Activity/Lesson is to help children understand why it is so important that safety belts cross strong bones instead of soft tummies and necks.

RATIONALE: Experience at Car Seat Checkups has shown that children who understand the concept of “Soft Tummies, Strong Bones” are more highly motivated to buckle up in the correct seat every time they ride in the car.



DURATION: 20-30 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- ★ Children will be able to identify their soft tummies vs. strong shoulder and hipbones so they understand correct placement of the safety belt.
- ★ Children will be able to explain why a safety belt that crosses strong bones offers better protection in a crash.
- ★ Children will be able to show how a lap and shoulder belt should fit.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Soft items: paper towels, toilet paper
- Hard items: wooden spoon, hardcover book, broom
- A belt with a buckle to simulate a seat belt.

Better option: A 3 ft. piece of webbing with a buckle, similar to a car safety belt (*often available at local sporting goods stores. You also can search shopping on the Web for a nylon wader belt.*)



- The *I'm Safe in the Car* storybook and poster.
- Optional: pictures showing a rock climber in a safety harness, a window washer, or race car driver, all with safety belts.
- Optional: Rhythm sticks, tambourine, or guitar accompaniment for “This is the Way We Ride in the Car.”

DAILY REMINDERS

(for use during transition times)

- 💡 “Let’s pretend we are riding in a car to go to _____ (*recess, snack time, etc.*) Can you put your hands on your strong bones to show where your safety belts should go?”
- 💡 “Let’s pretend we are riding in a car with our safety belts buckled. Oh no! A puppy just ran in front of the car. Stop! Oh good. We missed the puppy; he’s okay. But we were thrown forward because we stopped so suddenly. Good thing our safety belts are crossing strong bones— they helped protect us so we didn’t get hurt.”

LET’S GO!

🚗 In circle or small group time, recall the children’s answers for the Critical Thinking Questions, page 20.

🚗 Talk about safety belts: (Refer to the poster.) Who wears safety belts? Why do they wear them? (Examples: Rock climbers, race car drivers, window washers.)

🚗 Read *I’m Safe in the Car* together. Ask the children what they noticed about safety belts. Why do they think wearing safety belts is important?

🚗 Explain that it isn’t enough just to wear a safety belt. The safety belt has to fit. It has to be worn the right way. (*Good opportunity for silliness: What if a rock climber wore her safety harness on her foot— would that protect her if she fell? What if*


a race car driver put his safety belt behind his back?)

🚗 Now tell the children that you are going to show them a very special trick—something many grown-ups don’t know! Ask the children to stand up. Can they feel their tummies (as Kip and Kayla did in the story)? Are their tummies soft or hard? Now, can they feel their hip and shoulder bones? Are the bones soft or hard?

🚗 “Let’s see what happens when a safety belt crosses something soft, like our tummies.” Pull out the roll of toilet paper or paper towels. Ask a child to hold them like a piece of string strung from one hand to the other. Loop the webbing with the buckle or the belt around the paper. Ask the children what

LESSON #1, LET'S GO! CONTINUED

they think will happen when you pull the webbing . . . show them how the paper tears. Let some of the children try it. Ask what they noticed. "Soft things, like our tummies, are easy to break!"

 Next, ask the children what they think will happen when a safety belt crosses something strong, like our shoulder or hip bones. Have one child hold the wooden spoon, another, the hardcover book,

and another, the broom. Let the children take turns wrapping the belt or webbing around each item and pulling. Bring everyone back together and talk about what happened.

VOCABULARY WORDS:

- Car Seat Checkup
- Safety Belts
- Safety Seat
- Booster Seat



WRAP UP

Re-read the book (optional).
 Ask children what they can tell their families about safety belts. "How should they fit?"
 Give the children the option of adding what they learned to the story map. (See Quick Start Guidelines, page 4.)
 Choose one of the following pages from the *I'm*

Safe in the Car Activity Book for children to complete or color at home: page 5, 6, 7 or 15.
 Sing the first 3 verses of "This is the Way We Ride in the Car" to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush." The third verse provides a preview of tomorrow's Activity/Lesson.

THIS IS THE WAY WE RIDE IN THE CAR

WORDS

This is the way we ride in the car,
 Ride in the car, ride in the car.
 This is the way we ride in the car,
 Every time we ride.

This is the way our safety belts fit,
 Across our shoulders, 'cross our hips.
 This is the way our safety belts fit,
 When we're in the car.

My safety seat is just for me,
 Just for me, just for me.
 My safety seat is just for me,
 When we're in the car.

My safety seat goes in the back,
 In the back, in the back.
 My safety seat goes in the back,
 When we're in the car.

I help by riding quietly,
 Quietly, quietly.
 I help by riding quietly,
 When we're in the car.

I stay buckled 'til the car is off,
 Car is off, car is off.
 I stay buckled 'til the car is off,
 Every time we ride.

Repeat first verse.

MOTIONS

Have children make circles with their index fingers to simulate the movement of the car wheels.

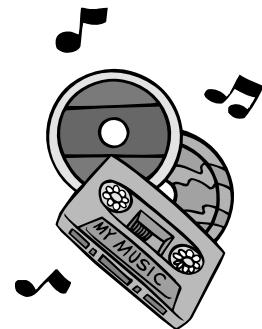
Have children pretend to buckle their safety belts, then pat their shoulders and their hips.

Have the children pretend to buckle their seat, then pat their chests with both hands on "just for me."

Children can point with both thumbs back over their shoulders when they sing "in the back."

Have the children bring their index finger to their lips as if saying "Shush."

Have the children pretend to buckle their safety belts, then pretend to turn the key off in the ignition.



KEY EXPERIENCES REINFORCED IN THIS LESSON:

- * Creative expression
- * Observation
- * Language and literacy
- * Initiative
- * Problem solving
- * Gross and fine motor movement
- * Developing judgment
- * Following directions
- * Self-confidence
- * Taking turns
- * Self control
- * Music