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**ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY  
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL**

**Effective Date:** August 8, 2002  
**Revised:** March 27, 2017

**Number:** D-0301

## **Car Seat Usage**

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<b>Purpose</b>	To provide guidelines to ensure children are properly secured when transported in a staff or county vehicle.
<b>Approved</b>	This revised policy was approved by Anne Bloxom, Director of CFS, on March 27, 2017. <i>Signature on file.</i>
<b>Most Recent Revision</b>	This revision of the Policy and Procedure (P&P) incorporates the following updated information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children under two years of age must be properly secured in a rear-facing child restraint system, unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds or is 40 or more inches tall</li></ul>
<b>Background</b>	Effective January 1, 2017, Assembly Bill (AB) 53 (2015) modified Vehicle Code sections related to child restraint systems with the intent to provide children with the safest transportation possible.
<b>Definitions</b>	<p><b>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):</b> A federal program that certifies technicians in child restraint systems.</p> <p><b>NHTSA-Certified Technicians:</b> CFS staff certified by the NHTSA in child restraint systems.</p> <p><b>Hippo Spica Car Seat:</b> A specific type of car seat used when transporting a child with casts/body casts.</p> <p><b>Vehicle seat belt system:</b> A combination lap and shoulder safety belt.</p>

**Child restraint system:** The vehicle seat belt system, and a car or booster seat.

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## POLICY

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### General Guidelines

CFS staff will properly secure each child transported using a federally approved child restraint system which is appropriate for the age, physical, and special needs of the child. CFS P&P [Transportation of Children \(D-0307\)](#) provides other guidelines related to transporting children and will be used in conjunction with this policy.

**Note:** Refer to [Attachment 1—Car Seat Practice Standards](#) for specific instructions to install each type of car seat purchased by the county. Refer to [Attachment 2—CFS NHTSA-Certified Technicians](#) for a list of staff who have been certified.

#### **Guidelines for Properly Fitting Seat Belts:**

Prior to transporting a child, in order to determine that a vehicle seat belt system fits properly, staff will use a best practice concept developed by SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. to assess a child's readiness to use the vehicle seat belt system, without a booster (e.g., Five Step Test).

- Does the child sit all the way back against the vehicle seat?
- Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the vehicle seat?
- Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
- Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
- Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If the answer is "no" to one or more of these questions, a booster seat will be required to properly secure each child transported.

#### **Kaitlyn's Law:**

Staff will adhere to California Vehicle Code § 15620, which prohibits drivers from leaving a child six years of age or younger in a vehicle without being supervised by a person 12 years of age or older, if:

- The engine is running and/or the keys are in the ignition
- Or-**
- There is a health or safety risk to the child

**Smoking:**

Staff will adhere to California Health and Safety Code § 118948(a), which prohibits tobacco smoking in a vehicle if a child under 18 years of age is present.

**Age Guidelines**

- A. **Children under two years of age:** Children weighing less than 40 pounds or those who are less than 40 inches in height, will be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system pursuant to Vehicle Code § 27360.

A child in a rear-facing car seat will not ride in the front passenger seat if there is an active frontal passenger air bag pursuant to Vehicle Code § 27363.

- B. **Children under eight years of age:** Children under eight years of age will be transported in a car or booster seat in the back seat of the vehicle pursuant to Vehicle Code § 27360.

A child under the age of eight years, who is at least 57 inches tall (4 feet, 9 inches), may utilize the vehicle seat belt system if it fits properly.

**Exceptions:** Pursuant to Vehicle Code § 27363, a child under eight years of age may ride in the front seat, properly secured, **IF** any of the following apply:

- There is no back seat
- There is no forward-facing back seat
- The rear seats are side facing jump seats
- The car seat cannot be installed properly in the back seat
- All back seats are already occupied by children seven years of age or under
- Medical reasons necessitate that the child not ride in the back seat

C. **Children eight years of age and older, but less than 16 years:**

Pursuant to Vehicle Code § 27360.5, children eight years of age and older, but less than 16 years of age may use the vehicle seat belt system if it fits properly. If children are not tall enough for proper belt fit, they must ride in a booster or car seat.

D. **Children 16 years of age and older:**

Pursuant to Vehicle Code § 27315, children 16 years of age and older must be properly restrained by a safety belt when they are a passenger or driver in a vehicle.

E. **Children of any age with casts/body casts and special needs:**

Children with casts/body casts, and special needs, (i.e., medical equipment, poor muscle control, behavioral problems, etc.) will be evaluated by a NHTSA-Certified Technician for appropriate child restraint system prior to being transported. See [Attachment 2—CFS NHTSA-Certified Technicians](#) for staff identified as technicians. If this is not possible, every effort will be made to transport the child safely.

When needed, the Hippo Spica car seat may be checked out for a 24-hour period from the Courtesy Desk at Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC). Refer to “Using Hippo Spica Car Seat” Procedure section below for further instructions.

On rare occasions, a medical doctor’s order may instruct the child to utilize safety belts in a particular manner rather than in a car seat.

**Note:** Children discharged from Children’s Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) to direct care of a licensed foster parent or relative caregiver may be provided with a child restraint system and education from CHOC’s community education department. CHOC’s community education car seat technician will determine what type of child restraint system accommodates the child’s needs.

**General  
Exceptions**

Pursuant to Vehicle Code 27363(b) and (c), the following also apply to children of any age:

- In a life-threatening emergency or when a child is being transported in an authorized emergency vehicle, a seatbelt only may be used if there is no child restraint system available
- A child weighing more than 40 pounds may be transported in the back seat while wearing only a lap safety belt when the vehicle is not equipped with a combination lap and shoulder safety belt

**NHTSA-Certified Technicians**

CFS programs will identify technicians to provide direct assistance with safety and car seat installation questions and maintenance to staff that transport children. All technicians will be certified through NHTSA training. Refer to [Attachment 2—CFS NHTSA-Certified Technicians](#) for a list of staff identified as technicians.

NHTSA-Certified Technicians will be responsible to:

- Obtain certification from the NHTSA. This NHTSA certification requires 40 hours of initial comprehensive training, and re-certification every two years.
- Attend a “Training for Trainers,” which will equip them to assist HCA in training all staff who transport.
- Assist in the hands-on phase of training provided by HCA to all staff, on an as-needed basis.
- Provide assistance to individual workers within their program regarding questions or concerns about car seat installation/use.
- Provide short-term, emergency training to new or transferred social workers who have not yet completed their car seat training but have immediate need to transport a child.
- Assist as needed, including but not limited to, assessment of the following:
  - Can the child be safely transported using a county-purchased car seat?
  - Is a second staff person needed to assist in transporting the child?

3. Does the child need to be transported by ambulance or a certified medical transport?
- G. Provide assistance with safety issues related to transporting children with casts/ body casts and special needs, (i.e., medical equipment, poor muscle control, behavioral problems, etc.).
  - H. If determined that the Hippo Spica car seat is appropriate, advise the transporter to check out the car seat from the Courtesy Desk at OCFC. The NHTSA-Certified Technician will provide directions and/or installation of the seat.
  - I. Monitor working condition of car or booster seats assigned to program and request purchase of replacement seats as needed.
  - J. Report recall problems or issues to CFS Facilities Operations.
  - K. Report car and booster seats involved in an accident to CFS Facilities Operations. If needed, assist in storage of the car or booster seat.

**Training and Career Development (TCD)**

Training and Career Development (TCD) staff will be responsible to:

- A. Facilitate an approved, standardized training for all staff needing to transport children. The training will be mandatory and include both classroom and hands-on instruction, provided by HCA.
- B. Request each Program Manager (PM) involved in transportation of children to maintain designated staff as resources for expertise and hands-on training within the program, as needed.
- C. Maintain and update list of NHTSA-Certified Technicians and contact numbers as indicated in [Attachment 2—CFS NHTSA-Certified Technicians](#) list. The attachment will be updated as changes are reported from Program Managers.

**CFS Facilities Operations**

CFS Facilities Operations provides support for recall, maintenance, and ordering of car seats for staff that transport children. CFS Facilities Operations will be responsible to:

- A. Serve as point of contact for recall notification from manufacturer. Report any recall status to NHTSA-Certified Technicians.
- B. Facilitate requests to purchase new car seats and booster seats that meet federal safety standards at least every six years or as items expire or need replacement.

**NOTE:** Car seats will be purchased from one manufacturer to comply with the necessary standardized training and to maintain a best practice usage among numerous staff and vehicles.

- C. Complete and mail registration cards for each purchased car and booster seat.
- D. Maintain a master inventory and tracking system of county purchased car and booster seats assigned to CFS.
- E. For car and booster seats involved in an accident:
  - Destroy car or booster seat
  - Or-
  - Store car or booster seat for insurance investigation purposes

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## REFERENCES

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### Attachments and CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards

Hyperlinks are provided below to access attachments to this P&P and any CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards that are referenced.

- [Attachment 1—Car Seat Practice Standards](#)
- [Attachment 2—CFS NHTSA-Certified Technicians](#)

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### Hyperlinks

Users accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on the hyperlinks provided.

- CFS P&P [Transportation of Children \(D-0307\)](#) provides other guidelines related to transporting children and should be used in conjunction with this policy
- [SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.](#), P.O. Box 553, Altadena, CA 91003,

is a national non-profit organization dedicated to child passenger safety

- [The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Child Safety Recall Campaign Listing](#) provides a current listing of car seat safety recalls
- “[Booster Seats Are For Big Kids](#)” pamphlet from SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

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**Other Sources** Other printed references include the following:

None.

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## FORMS

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**Online Forms** Forms listed below may be printed out and completed, or completed online, and may be accessed by clicking on the link provided.

	<b>Form Name</b>	<b>Form Number</b>
	None.	

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**Hard Copy Forms** Forms that may be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms) are listed below. ***For reference purposes only***, links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

	<b>Form Name</b>	<b>Form Number</b>
	None.	

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**CWS/CMS Forms** Forms that may **only** be obtained in CWS/CMS are listed below. ***For reference purposes only***, links are provided to view these CWS/CMS forms, where available.

	<b>Form Name</b>	<b>Form Number</b>
	None.	

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**Brochures** Brochures to distribute in conjunction with this policy may include:

	<b>Brochure Name</b>	<b>Brochure Number</b>
	<a href="#">Birth to Boosters (HCA brochure)</a>	DTP410
	<a href="#">Birth to Boosters (HCA brochure)</a> (Spanish)	DTP410



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## PROCEDURE

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<b>Actions— Transportation of Children Staff Responsible</b>	For CFS staff that transport children, complete the following actions.	
	<u>Step</u>	<u>Action</u>
<b>Staff assigned to provide transportation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> <li>8.</li> </ol>	<p>Prior to installing a car seat and transporting a child, attend mandatory training and any follow-up training, as required.</p> <p>Maintain a vehicle seat belt system that is in good working condition. If using a county car, report any seatbelt problem to the county garage and change to another vehicle prior to transporting a child.</p> <p>Store loose items (e.g., tissue boxes, books, toys, etc.) in the vehicle trunk, compartments, or floor, to avoid possible injury during an accident.</p> <p>Properly secure each child transported, per above policy and the mandatory standardized training instructions provided by HCA.</p> <p><u>Never</u> leave a child unattended in a vehicle.</p> <p>Ensure county-owned car seats are not loaned to parents or caregivers.</p> <p>Consult with Certified Technicians, see <a href="#">Attachment 2—CFS NHTSA-Certified Technicians</a> list, as needed, for questions or concerns.</p> <p>Utilize Practice Standards, <a href="#">Attachment 1—Car Seat Practice Standards</a>, which contains specific instructions to install each type of car seat purchased by the county.</p>

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**Actions—  
Using Hippo  
Spica Car Seat  
Staff**

Complete the following when it is determined that a child needs to be transported in a Hippo Spica car seat.

<u>Responsible</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Action</u>
<b>Staff assigned to provide transportation</b>	1.	Request to check out the Hippo Spica car seat for a 24-hour period at Courtesy Desk at OCFC (phone number 714-935-7040).  <b>Note:</b> The Hippo Spica car seat must be returned within 24 hours unless pre-arranged with OCFC.
	2.	Complete log for check-out, including expected time of return.
	3.	Request assistance from a NHTSA-Certified Technicians to install the car seat and assess need for second staff member's assistance in transporting child. See <a href="#">Attachment 2—CFS NHTSA-Certified Technicians</a> for staff identified as technicians.
	4.	When transportation is completed, return Hippo Spica car seat to Courtesy Desk at OCFC, and complete check-in log.

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## **LEGAL MANDATES**

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[Vehicle Code Section 27360](#) states drivers may not transport a child under eight years of age in a vehicle without properly securing the child in the back seat in a child restraint system meeting federal standards. See the Policy section below for exceptions noted.

[Vehicle Code Section 27360](#) states drivers who transport a child under two years of age will properly secure the child in a rear-facing child restraint system, unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds or is 40 or more inches tall.

[Vehicle Code Section 27360.5](#) prohibits any driver from transporting a child between 8 and 16 years of age in a vehicle without properly securing the child in a child restraint system or vehicle seat belt system meeting federal safety standards.

[Vehicle Code Section 27315](#) defines a motor vehicle as any passenger vehicle, including trucks, but excludes motorcycles.

[Vehicle Code Section 27315](#) prohibits drivers from operating a vehicle unless that person and all passengers 16 years of age and older are properly secured in the vehicle seat belt system.

[Vehicle Code Section 27315](#) prohibits persons 16 years of age or over from being a passenger in a vehicle unless that person is properly secured in the vehicle seat belt system.

[Vehicle Code Section 27363](#) lists exceptions for transporting children without a child restraint system.

[Vehicle Code Section 15620](#) (Kaitlyn's Law) prohibits drivers from leaving a child six years of age or younger in a vehicle without being supervised by a person 12 years of age or older, if the health or safety of the child is at risk, the engine is running, or the keys are in the ignition.

[Health and Safety Code 118948](#) prohibits tobacco smoking in a vehicle if a child under 18 years of age is present.

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## REVISION HISTORY

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Since the Effective Date of this P&P, and prior to the Current Revision Date, the following revisions of this P&P were published:

March 19, 2008  
April 21, 2009  
August 15, 2012