

# The Safest Ride

Washington State  
**CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY PROGRAM**



## What is The Safest Ride Program and Why Does It Matter?

The Safest Ride program is designed to encourage local injury prevention programs to form relationships with schools in order to educate staff and parents about the importance of riding buckled up in the back seat.

The program is being revised and reintroduced as a result of recent statewide observational studies which indicated a pattern of decreasing compliance with Washington's child restraint law 46.61.687 as children get older. Our goal is to help ensure children of all ages ride safely in the car.

## The Safest Ride can directly impact this behavior with proven analysis as shown in the 2015 Evaluation Report.

*Observation results found an average 12.3% increase (pre-intervention to post-intervention) in the number of children correctly riding in the back seat, with a 95% confidence interval of a 6.4 to 18.1% increase. The increase from pre-intervention to later follow-up was also statistically significant, with an average 15.3% increase in the number of children riding in the rear seat (95% CI 11.6-18.9%).*

## Entering into a commitment to participate in The Safest Ride program means:

- Utilizing existing partnerships or establishing connections with Safe Kids Coalitions, Target Zero Task Forces, Child Passenger Safety Teams and elementary schools.
- Execute the program in Spring 2025 of the current school year.
- Utilize all tools provided by the Washington Child Passenger Safety Program for The Safest Ride program.
- Provide program results to Cesi Velez, Project Manager, [velezc@cobl.us](mailto:velezc@cobl.us) after recording your pre and post survey results.

### Five-step test: Moving from a Booster Seat to a Seat Belt

#### Must Say Yes to All Five



**1**

Back against vehicle seat; no slouching.



**2**

Knees bend at edge of seat.



**3**

Lap belt low across upper thighs & shoulder belt across mid shoulder.



**4**

Feet rest on floor.



**5**

Remain in position entire trip.

**Most children need a booster until 8-12 years old**

# A Summary of the Program Steps is Below

## WEEK 1

### WEEK 1:

**Pre- observational surveys conducted by** volunteers to record total number of children observed, those riding in the front seat and not properly restrained. **Education is conducted with the parent letter** shared to all school families after conducting the observational surveys. **The Safest Ride send home week 1**

## WEEK 2

### WEEK 2:

**Education** is conducted using A-boards placed in school drop-off/pick-up location; vinyl banner displayed at school entrance or cafeteria; and posters placed in school office or classrooms (all included in the SR Program package). **Community awareness** outside of the school setting (ie; social media, website, readerboards, community events, classroom visits,...).

## WEEK 3

### WEEK 3:

**Education continued** with a meet and greet at the drop-off of children at elementary school. Child passenger safety technicians, police, fire, EMS and other volunteers will greet students as they arrive at school. Children riding correctly in the back seat or in a booster may receive a Sgt. Safety ruler/bookmark. ALL drivers will receive The Safest Ride rack card.

## WEEK 4

### WEEK 4:

**Post-Observational surveys** conducted by volunteers to record total number of children observed, those riding in the front seat and not properly restrained. Observation should occur on the same day of the week as the pre-observational study.

### Evaluation:

Record the Pre and Post observational survey results in the table on **The Safest Ride send home week 4**. Input your pre and post observation results in the table linked to the week 4 letter found at

<https://wacarseats.com/safest-ride/>. There is also an instructional video of how to access the spreadsheet linked to the document.

Send home the Week 4 letter to all families which displays the Pre and Post results.

You may also publicize via available communication channels/media.

## FINAL REPORT OUT

Send Cesi Velez, [velezc@cobl.us](mailto:velezc@cobl.us) your Week 4 letter which displays results of the pre and post observations. Include any lessons learned, suggestions to improve the program, what worked well and what didn't.

### FOLLOW-UP (optional)

*Follow-up Observation and Final Evaluation (normally 60+ days after initial observations):*

Morning observations of children arriving at school—see Safest Ride Tally Form. Observation should occur on the same day of the week as the initial campaign observational study. Compare rates to the initial observations to determine rate of change and final outcomes of the campaign. Provide results to [velezc@cobl.us](mailto:velezc@cobl.us)

# Be Prepared: What You Should Know and Do

## SCHOOL

- Select a school with significant number of parents dropping off children in the morning.
- Contact your elementary school (principal, counselor, or office manager are suggested contacts).
- Offer to meet in person to explain the project.
- Obtain permission to conduct the surveys during morning drop-off.
- Find out school start time.
- If school offers breakfast, ask what time children are dropped off.
- School staff should NOT tell parents in advance of surveys; caregivers that know they are being observed will change their behavior.
- Request school admin notify school zone patrol of surveys.

- Arrange distribution of parent letter (provide electronic letter).
- Visit school to observe morning traffic flow **before survey is conducted.**

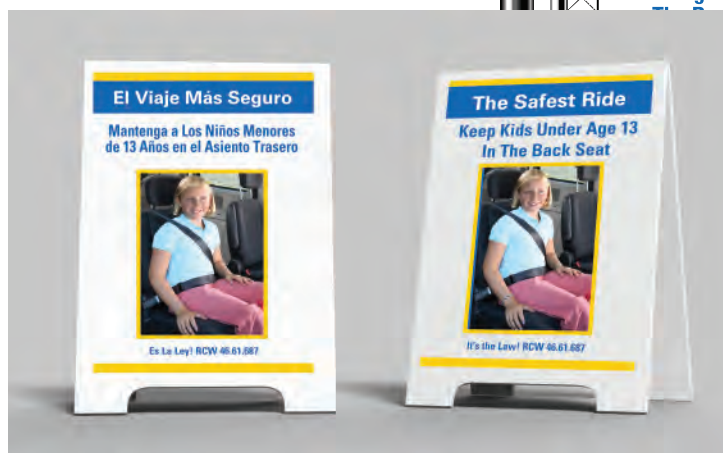
## OBSERVERS

- Preferably child passenger safety technicians.
- Suggest hosting a brief training on conducting observations.
- Records data on Safest Ride Tally Form attached to clipboard.
- Does not interact with drivers or children; observers are inconspicuous.
- **REMEMBER** - We are only there to collect data when observing; not change behavior.

11" x 9" Poster



9' x 4' Outdoor Banner



Bilingual Rack Card

Bilingual Sidewalk Signs



# Recording Results of Surveys

Tally form for recording surveys can be found at <https://wacarseats.com/safest-ride/>

Number of children in vehicle.	Student exiting car from front seat. <i>One tally mark for each student exiting front seat.*</i>	Student under 4'9" and NOT in a booster <i>One tally mark for each.*</i>
4 2 1	<del>    </del> //	///
Total	Total	Total

The above example shows three vehicles recorded transporting 4, 2 and one child. Of these vehicles, two children exited the front seat and one was riding without a booster who appeared to be under 4'9" tall.

## Volunteers Needed for Meet and Greet

- ☐ Utilize volunteers from technician network, police, fire, EMS.
- ☐ Volunteer; smiles and says to driver  
"Good morning. I have some child safety information for you." Hand the driver The Safest Ride rack card.
- ☐ To children exiting back seat or correctly restrained, provides their "prize" and a "good job riding in the back seat."
  - Order Sergeant. Safety ruler/bookmark from the [state printer](#).
- ☐ You may obtain funding from an alternate source to purchase a different prize if you want to use something other than the Sgt. Safety ruler/bookmark



Sergeant. Safety ruler/bookmark

## Items Needed for Observers

(Per School):

- ☐ Observers
- ☐ Blank Safest Ride Tally Form on clip boards
- ☐ Several pens/pencils (mechanical pencils with erasers work great)

## Items Needed for Volunteers

(Per School):

- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ The Safest Ride rack cards
- ☐ Sgt. Safety ruler/bookmarks (or other prize)

## Contact:

Cesi Velez, Project Manager  
WA CPS Program  
velezc@cobl.us  
253-447-3257