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## Infant and Toddler Car Seat Safety

Posted by Candace Lindemann in Gear, Safety | August 27th, 2008 | [Trackback](#)

*Britax gave me the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Jana, a pediatric safety consultant, to discuss car seat safety.*

"Making sure your child is properly restrained in the car is one of the single most important things you can do to keep your child safe." Discussing the flood of shifting information available to parents, Dr. Jana, a pediatric safety consultant and child passenger safety technician, urges parents to select and use any car seat that fits both their child and their car as the fundamental step for protecting children.



As a consultant for Britax, Dr. Jana focuses on conveying important information to parents about crash safety and injury prevention so they can use their car seat properly. And her primary message is to use the car seat and use it as long as as the seat's limits allow. Instead of asking, 'When can I turn my child's car seat face forward, switch to a booster seat, or stop using a car seat altogether,' Ask 'When does my child have to?' In other words, don't be eager to take them out of the thing that keeps them safer."

To that end, Dr. Jana applauds both true safety innovations that function in a crash and added comfort features that encourage consistent use of the seat.

Britax is a leader in the car seat field in creating seats with **higher weight limits**; introducing a **rear-facing tether**; offering **side-impact crash protection** (side-impact crashes represent 1 out of 4 crashes and are the most likely to cause serious harm and death); **boosters with head protection**; and providing **five-point restraints** for forward facing seats in boosters. Dr. Jana pointed out that car manufacturers even tested five-point harnesses for adults but these were rejected by consumers. "If we could all ride around in a five-point harness, we'd all be safer."

Britax is also known for its responsiveness to the **special needs community**, exploring ways to accommodate populations of children who otherwise might have difficulty using regular car seats.

In considering recent concerns involving **chemicals in car seat fabrics**, Dr. Jana believes these should be considered from a research and standpoint and urges parents to emphasize safety and usability features when choosing a car seat.

According to Dr. Jana, **correct installation** is one of the most difficult parts of using a car seat properly. She said that many parents do not read the instruction manual before installing the seat. She acknowledges that the manuals can be difficult to read (much of the language is federally mandated) and encourages parents to check out the [Britax safety center car seat installation videos](#). BabyCenter also has helpful videos on [how to install an infant car seat](#), [how to install a toddler car seat](#), and [how to install a booster seat](#).

Dr. Jana also advocates **having your car seat checked** and making sure you learn how to uninstall and reinstall the car seat. As many as 80-90% of car seats are found to be installed incorrectly at checks. At [NHTSA.gov](#), you can [find car seat check up events by zip code](#).

And anything that makes the seat easier to use is a positive innovation. "A

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And anything that makes the seat easier to use is a positive innovation. A cup holder can be a safety feature," explains Dr. Jana. "Since the toughest thing can be getting booster-seat age child to sit in a seat, a well-designed, ergonomic, easily adjustable seat, that is also comfortable and appealing is going to get more consistent and extended use."

I'll be following this interview with a review of the new Britax Boulevard CS and its safety features. To find out more about Dr. Laura Jana's work in parent and consumer information campaigns and pediatric safety, check out [drlaurajana.com](http://drlaurajana.com).

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## 9 Responses to "Infant and Toddler Car Seat Safety"

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### 1. Anne Says:

August 27th, 2008 at 9:42 am

Thanks for bringing up the subject! Car safety (for all ages) is one of my passions. (Number one gripe about my dad's car: lap-only belts in the back. NO ONE can sit safely in a lap-only belt, the only appropriate use for them is installing a five-point harness seat!) I think one of the biggest issues is that parents don't even know to ask if they're doing it right, so I applaud anyone who educates on this (even if this post does kind of read like an ad for Britax! I want to emphasize that the safest seat is the one that fits the child, the car, and the budget. My kids are in Radians, made by [Sunshine Kids Juvenile Products](#), another car seat safety leader, because that's how we can fit 3 in the back of our Corolla. My only gripe with them is all the after-market products they make!) One great thing about many of the Britax seats that you didn't go into is their seats have higher harness weight limits to keep kids safely harnessed longer (and 35 lb. rear-facing limits to keep them safely rear-facing as long as possible, as the AAP recommends.) They started the trend and more and more manufacturers are getting on board, which is great—it means more families with varied budgets will be able to keep their kids safely harnessed longer!

### 2. Anne Says:

August 27th, 2008 at 9:45 am

Okay, I must be tired. I just read that you DID mention higher weight limits (if only briefly!)

The other thing about their high weight limits is that they provide nice high shoulder slots to match—since most seats are outgrown by height before weight by most children, this is essential.

### 3. Candace Lindemann Says:

August 27th, 2008 at 11:18 am

Hi, Anne,

Britax did give me the chance to speak with Dr. Jana. However, she is an independent consultant. She told me that with most clients, she speaks only about safety and similar issues in general. With Britax, her main concern is also safety information.

As I mentioned, she "urges parents to select and use any car seat that fits both their child and their car."

And most of the information is general to using all car seats. At the same time, Britax is honestly her choice of seat and, based on my consumer research, it is mine, too, for the reasons listed.

Thanks for emphasizing and adding information—I agree these points can't be made strongly and often enough!

### 4. Krystal Says:

August 27th, 2008 at 11:36 am

I like how you stated that there are considerations for special needs children because I have gone through MANY car seats and none can seem to keep my kids in.

It is something about that little plastic buckle in the middle that brings the two straps together - they can slide them down and out come their arms!! they have sensory issues with just basic cotton clothes so add on a strap and that makes it worse for them!

### 5. Meowmie Says:

August 27th, 2008 at 7:40 pm

I'm a Volvo mama (can you see my safety paranoia through the screen? LOL!) and DD has picked up my fussiness about safety belts. She hollers if it isn't buckled correctly and has done so since she was about

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12 months old.

This is a helpful post for me at the moment since DD has just grown out of her standard car seat with her latest increase in height. I am off to look at the next models.

6. [BabyCenter: MOMformation » Blog Archive » Review of the Britax Boulevard CS](#) Says:

September 2nd, 2008 at 10:00 am

[...] up on my interview with Dr. Jana (drlaurajana.com) about common car seat safety concerns, I checked out the new Britax Boulevard CS and am impressed with its safety [...]

7. [BabyCenter: MOMformation » Blog Archive » Britax Frontier 5-point to booster is comfortable and safe](#) Says:

February 25th, 2009 at 12:08 pm

[...] key safety features on a car seat is comfort, because the more comfortable a car seat is, the more diligent parents are about using the seat consistently. Although I would never take my daughter out of a car seat just because she was complaining, I was [...]

8. [Tony](#) Says:

March 19th, 2009 at 1:09 am

Hello everyone-

I would like to bring your attention to The Jing Joe Cooling/Warming Infant Pad is an amazing new product that is now available to fit most car seats, strollers, bouncers, and swings that will keep the child dry and comfortable during the summer and winter. It may be used to cover belt buckles, straps, and snaps to prevent child from getting burns. The Jing Joe Cooling/Warming Infant Pad comes with adapters for the home and car. It also include a battery pack for more portability uses. Visit [JingJoe.com](#) for more information.

9. [Josh](#) Says:

May 18th, 2009 at 12:54 pm

I have a medium sized business where I let some of my employees drive around with their children in the car. I get so worried about my own employees safety, much less their children safety. I have a [PEO](#) that handles all my workers safety concerns and claims - though I always bring these type of articles to peoples attention.

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