

Child safety seats not installed properly

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Many parents are confused about the right way to install a child safety seat despite a rule to simplify the process, a U.S. government agency said.

A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration survey said about 40 percent of parents rely on seat belts when installing the car seat, the Insurance Journal said. About 55 percent of parents use the top tether in a vehicle's rear seat to secure their children.

NHTSA in 2002 required new vehicles and child seats be equipped with attachments that make them fit together as a key in a lock so a seat belt would not be used. The system, Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children, was developed to ensure seats fit snugly and to provide an alternative to using seat belts.

"LATCH was supposed to simplify child safety seat installation for parents and this study shows that isn't happening," Nicole Nason, NHTSA administrator, said.

Even though 55 percent of respondents used the top tether, researchers said "many parents are not yet protecting their children with this technology."

More than half of the parents who did not use the upper tether or lower attachments cited a lack of knowledge of the system.

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