

Protecting Our *Children*

Parents Latch On To New Car Seat System

(NAPSA)—Parents face many challenges these days, but luckily, due to a recently enacted federal law, installing car seats doesn't need to be one of these challenges. LATCH is a helpful new system that makes it easier for parents to properly install children's car seats.

LATCH, an acronym for Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children, is a standardized system that helps simplify car seat installation. However, in order for the LATCH system to work properly, it requires an understanding of the new system:

- Vehicles manufactured after September 1, 2002 must be equipped with special lower anchor points, consisting of sets of bars in the rear seat of vehicles, at or just above the seat crease.

- Children's car seats must have a set of latching straps or tubes to attach to the anchorage bars in the vehicles.

Once both of these specifications are in order, car seat straps will simply attach to the bars in the car. These lower anchor points eliminate the need to rely on automobile safety belts to hold children's car seats in place, thus making installation easier.

For additional restraint, top tether straps can also be used with the lower anchorage system for forward-facing convertible car seats and booster seats with a harness restraint. The top tether strap provides an extra anchor and is designed to further secure the child restraint.

Many car seat manufacturers, such as Evenflo, offer car seats that meet the LATCH requirements.



The new LATCH system simplifies car seat installation.

“With newer vehicles complying with LATCH system requirements we are excited to provide parents with car seats that are convenient to use, secure for their child and simpler to install,” said Wayne Robinson, CEO of Evenflo Company. “We’ve introduced a new line of car seats that will work with the LATCH system, as well as with the traditional automobile seat belts.”

Some passenger vehicles, including many mini-vans, built in or after September 2000 already have the anchors, and by September 2002, all automobile manufacturers are required to factory install two sets of bars in the rear seat of all vehicles. For families with LATCH compliant cars, but older model car seats, LATCH System Retrofit Kits are available for less than \$20 and allow parents to quickly install a seat and promote a tight and proper fit.

For more information about LATCH and car seat compatibility, visit Parent Link at www.parentlink.com or call 1-800-233-5921.