

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
County of Luna

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Media Release

Luna County Parents as Teachers staff have hit a milestone in their effort to protect children riding in vehicles throughout the community.

As of October, all nine of the home visiting program’s staff became certified car seat technicians, meaning they have all passed training to safely install car seats for youngsters. It is the only home visiting program in Luna County with the entire staff certified as car seat technicians.

“Most car seats are used incorrectly, but I’m proud to say that our staff can make sure your child is not included in those statistics,” Anna Barraza, PAT director, said. She was referring to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s statistic that three quarters of car seats are used incorrectly. “Our caring staff will not only install the car seat correctly, but show parents how to buckle children correctly for every trip. We love kiddos and would hate to see any hurt due to using a car seat incorrectly.”

The staff members were certified through a program administered by Safer New Mexico Now, which is part of the New Mexico Department of Transportation’s Child Safety Seat Distribution Program. Technicians must go through an initial training and recertification every two years. Trainings include demonstrations on the proper installation and use of car seats, as well as updates on the latest car seat technology and models on the market.

Staff currently works with four car seat models designed for children weighing between five and 110 pounds. In exchange for a new car seat and education, program participants are asked to pay a \$20 donation, if they can afford it. That fee is sent to the statewide program to help fund more car seats. Barraza said her office distributes between 15 and 20 car seats a month to local parents. Luna County PAT is third across the state for the number of car seats safely installed.

“Luna County continues to make strides in protecting the health and welfare of residents in our community,” Charles “Tink” Jackson, Luna County manager, said. “I encourage locals to utilize these car seat services and the variety of other programs we offer.”

For more information about the car seat program, or other services offered by PAT, contact the office at (575) 546-9254.

CAPTION

Parent Educator Yolanda Ruiz, who is also a trained car seat technician, is shown fitting 11-month-old Matteo Barron into his new car seat.

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