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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Child Passenger Safety Week

BREWSTER, NY—Every September, National Child Passenger Safety Week (Sept. 14-20) is observed and parents resume driving their kids back and forth to school and activities. This makes it a good time to review guidelines for using car restraints. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children, from 1 through 13 years of age and improper use of car restraints is part of the problem. In 2012, over one third of children killed in car crashes were not in car seats, booster seats, or seat belts, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County and its NY state-approved Child Fatality Review Teams play an important role in injury prevention and offer the following guidelines.

The age, height and weight of the child all play a role in knowing what type of restraint to use and when to transition to the next level. Children should start out in a rear-facing car seat, and then move to a forward-facing one, a booster seat, and finally a regular seat belt.

Other recommendations from the NHTSA include:

- Select a car seat based on your child's age and size. Choose a seat that fits in your vehicle and use it every time.
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions. Read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system; and check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12.

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Police officers often provide car seat checks to make sure the car or booster seat is properly installed and fits the child. National Seat Check is Sept. 20 and some outside counties may be offering a check on this day. The Kent Police Department (225-4600) offers car seat checks by appointment. The Sheriff's Department (225-4300) also has certified deputies available all year round to help install car seats, by appointment only. Car seat checks are also conducted at the Annual Children's Expo & Public Safety Day, held in the spring.

Keep in mind that New York has child passenger safety laws and fines for a first offense range up to \$100, three plus points on a driver's license, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association and NY DMV website.

For more information, visit the "Parents Central" section of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website at <http://www.safercar.gov/parents/Home.htm>.

For more information on the CAC please visit the Putnam County website at <http://www.putnamcountyny.com> and under "Departments" select Child Advocacy Center; for more information on child fatality review teams visit <http://www.childdeathreview.org/>. Or visit our social media sites on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/putnamcac> and Twitter @PutnamCAC. The Health Department's mission is to protect and improve the health of the county's nearly 100,000 residents. For more information, please visit <http://www.putnamcountyny.com> or social media sites on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth> and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY .

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