APACHE COUNTY

Public Health Services District

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY

PRESS RELEASE

Saving Young Lives Throughout Apache County

October 22, 2026

Apache County Public Health Services District has been awarded grant funds in the amount of $35,840.00 through the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS). This invaluable program will benefit our community by providing car seat education and car seats to the public to help ensure highway safety for children in Apache County.

Why is using the right child safety seat important on every trip?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), car seats reduce children's risk of injury in a crash by 71–82% compared with seat belt use alone. Booster seats reduce the risk of serious injury by 45% for children ages 4–8 compared with seat belt use alone. Children should be properly buckled in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt appropriate for their age and size on every trip, no matter how short.

In 2024, 39% of children ages 14 and younger killed in passenger vehicle crashes were unrestrained. That year, an average of 349 children in this age group were injured each day while riding in passenger vehicles. Correctly selecting, installing, and using the appropriate restraint helps protect children every time they ride.

Risk Factors

- **Age and size:** Children are safest when using a car seat or booster appropriate for their age, height, and weight. Moving a child to a seat belt before it fits properly can increase the risk of injury in a crash.
- **Car seat misuse:** Loose installation, incorrect recline angles, loose harnesses, and improper positioning can reduce a car seat's effectiveness.
- **Unrestrained children:** In **2024, 39% of children ages 14 and younger killed in passenger vehicle crashes were unrestrained**.
- **Rural location:** National data from **2015–2019** showed child passenger death rates were highest in the most rural counties—**4.5 deaths per 100,000 population**, compared with **0.9** in the most urban counties. These findings highlight the importance of child passenger safety services in rural communities.
- **Disparities in restraint use:** Studies cited by CDC indicate that Black, Hispanic, and American Indian and Alaska Native children are more likely to travel unrestrained or improperly restrained. Access to affordable car seats and booster seats are among the factors that may contribute to these differences.

Have you heard about events where folks get one-on-one personalized instruction on how to properly use their child's car seat?

Our technicians are part of the team of over 41,000 nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPST) who are advocates and supply resources in our community! As a CPST, we provide community presentations and/or child safety seat checks where parents and caregivers receive education and hands-on assistance with the proper use of child restraint systems and seat belts, as well as free child safety seats.

If you would like more information on our car seat safety program, please call the Apache County Public Health Services District at (928) 337-1718 to schedule your appointment and speak with a car seat safety expert today.