

Impact Statement Template

Title: Car Seat Grant Provides Awareness and Safe Rides for Children in Candler and Evans Counties



Photo 1: Installing car seat into mini-van during Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) training



Photo 2: Providing education for parents/caregivers about child passenger safety at Metter Pre-K Orientation

Impact Statement Template

Geographic Scope:

County Multi-County District/Dept College University State

Muti-State/Regional National International

County: Candler/Evans

Location or Facility: (if applicable) 4-H Center _____ REC _____ UGA Campus

Your Unit/Department/Group: Southeast District Family and Consumer Sciences

Summary: (In a sentence or two, summarize the statement.)

The Candler/Evans County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent has increased availability and education of child passenger safety restraints in rural southeast Georgia. Parents/caregivers participate in an educational class and demonstration and are provided with a car seat or booster seat if they are in need or their seat is not appropriate for use.

Situation: (What is the issue? Who cares and why?)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that more than 2,600 children under 13 are involved in a car crash every day (one child every 33 seconds) Motor vehicle crashes are also one of the leading causes of preventable injuries and death for children ages 1-14. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that car seat use reduces the risk for injury in a crash by 71-82% and booster seats reduce the risk for serious injury by 45% for children ages 4-8 when compared to seat belt use alone. However, just because a car seat or booster seat is utilized, it does not necessary suggest that it is used correctly. Latest research shows that nearly 60 % of car seats are installed or adjusted incorrectly¹, exhibiting the need for enhanced education and accountability for adherence.

Evans County is home to approximately 2,190² children between the ages of birth to 14, which is within range of when they should be secured using an appropriate child restraint, such as a car seat or booster seat, or sitting in the backseat of a vehicle secured with a lap-and-shoulder belt. Candler County similarly has a population of about 2,322² children in this range. Without proper knowledge or adherence to child restraint guidelines in the case of a crash, children are subject to:

- Ejection
- Head, neck, and spinal cord injury
- Death

Through conversation and assessment with parents and caregivers in Candler and Evans Counties, it has clear that many parents do not possess the knowledge or the resources needed to provide a safe ride for their child.

Response: (What has been done? Summarize your program, project or response to the issue.)

In response to the rising number of car accidents and involved child passengers, the Candler/Evans County Family and Consumer Sciences agent took the initiative to participate in the necessary training to become certified as a child passenger safety technician. This training is offered in partnership with the Child Occupant Safety Project and Safe Kids Georgia. Since becoming certified, the agent has worked with local and state law enforcement agencies in Candler and Evans Counties, including the Evans County Sheriff's Office, the Metter Police Department and the Georgia State Patrol.

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She has exhibited at numerous community events to bring awareness to the opportunity for car seat education, such as the Evans County Back-to-School Bash and the Metter Pre-K orientation night. These events allowed parents to learn information about child passenger safety restraint best practices and Georgia State Law. Parent/guardian information was collected for those in need of car seats or booster seats for their children that met government assistance eligibility requirements. A referral system was created to share with local healthcare and childcare providers, business owners, and government agencies who have regular contact with parents and caregivers of young children to call to make an appointment to have their child passenger restraint seats checked for safety and compliance to Georgia State Law. A car seat safety check event was hosted at the Dairy Queen of Claxton in celebration of National Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Week to allow parents/caregivers to have multiple aspects of their child passenger restraints checked including:

- Appropriate seat for the height, weight, and developmental level of the child
- Expiration date
- Presence of unapproved products (extra foam padding, pillows, harness pads, etc.)
- Seat installed per manufacturer's instructions
- Correct direction of seat for height and weight of child

If parents or caregivers were found to be in violation of correct usage, the agent and other participating technicians educated the parent/caregiver and addressed the issue, sometimes resulting in the distribution of a new seat and proper disposal of the old one by the technician team.

Results/Impact: (How has your response affected the users/stakeholders involved with this issue?)

19 seats (3 high back booster seats, 16 convertible car seats) were distributed to families in Candler and Evans Counties since the mini-grant allotment in July of 2023. One mother of three expressed her gratitude and explained that she wished more people knew about this opportunity and that she just wanted to keep her kids safe. Through partnership with local law enforcement, Family Connections Collaborative, Department of Public Health, and the school systems, families are made aware of this resource and are referred to make an appointment with the Candler/Evans Family and Consumer Sciences Agent. Additional safety check and educational events are planned for the future with Candler County Head Start and the Evans County Community Safety Day.

Program Function(s): Instruction Research Extension

Program Area(s): ANR FACS 4-H Support Admin

Resources:

1. <https://safekidsgeorgia.org/carseats/>
2. <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryPopulation.aspx>