
Car Smarts

LEVEL: K-1-2-3-4-5-6

SUBJECT AREA(S): Health, Language Arts, Arts

OBJECTIVE: 1) Students will learn smart (safe) behavior in a car. 2) Students will be able to identify smart and risky (safe and unsafe) behavior in a vehicle. 3) Students will understand the importance of wearing an automobile seatbelt and using a child safety seat.

For Your Information

This lesson provides an appropriate review of car safety in preparation for car trips.

TIME: 40 minutes

MATERIALS

Figure 3-1: Automobile Safety Checklist

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. In cooperative learning groups, have students discuss what it means to be smart (safe) in a car. Have them develop a list of smart and risky (safe and unsafe) behaviors and explain them.

For Your Information

Seatbelts: Everyone in a car should be **buckled up**. Wearing a seatbelt could save a life in a crash. Not wearing a seatbelt is against the law and result in getting a ticket from the police.

Doors: All doors should be **locked**. This ensures that no one falls out and it keeps out people who don't belong inside the car.

Child Safety Seats: Babies should be strapped into child safety seats. **Children under four years of age or under 40 pounds** are too small to be held securely by a regular car seatbelt. Endangering a child passenger by not placing them in a child safety seat carries a fine.

Smart (Safe) Behavior: Riders **should not distract** the driver. Loud talking or

noise might take the driver's attention from the road and traffic.

2. Discuss what an occupant is. (*a person who takes up space inside an area; can be a house occupant, a room occupant, a car occupant*)

Discuss how many students wear **seatbelts** while riding in a car (being a car "occupant") and why or why not.

For Your Information

The most important reason for wearing a seatbelt is to save your life if you are in a crash. Of secondary importance is that wearing car seatbelts is the law in Iowa, a law that was passed to save lives. To enforce the law, police officers may give out traffic tickets for each person in a vehicle not wearing a seatbelt.

Discuss if students know how to **wear a seatbelt properly**.

For Your Information

1. Driver and passenger must wear both the lap belt and shoulder belt if the car contains both.
2. A seatbelt should be snug, but not too tight or too loose.
3. The lap belt should be low across the hips and across the upper thigh.
4. The shoulder belt should not cross the face or neck.
5. Passengers may find that a seatbelt is too large for a child or that it crosses the neck in an uncomfortable or dangerous way. In such cases, a kind of buckle may be purchased and used to shorten the seatbelt for a proper fit.

Discuss what behaviors promote safety in a car, bus, or other motor vehicle. (*talking quietly, refraining from making loud noises or wrestling, staying seated, keeping arms and heads inside the motor vehicle, keeping doors locked*)

ASSESSMENT

1. Have students draw and color a picture to illustrate each aspect of car safety.
2. Have students draw a picture, write a story, or both to illustrate how they will be a smart (safe) motor-vehicle occupant, and how they will help others to be smart (safe) occupants, too. Have students share their work with the class.

EXTENSIONS

1. Have each student be an “occupant safety patrol” in the family car, making certain all seatbelts are buckled, doors are locked, small children are strapped in child safety seats, etc.
2. Give second- and third-graders copies of Figure 3-1: Automobile Safety Checklist to take home and use to check their own family’s car-safety habits.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please refer to the Iowa Safe Routes to School Encouragement and Education Program Web site for additional resources (www.iowasaferoutes.org).

AUTOMOBILE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Name: _____

SMART (SAFE) BEHAVIORS	Yes	No
Everybody is buckled into a seatbelt .		
All the doors are locked .		
Children under four years of age or under 40 pounds are strapped into child safety seats .		
The driver is not distracted .		

Student name: _____ has checked this car for passenger safety.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Figure 3-1