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Reminder on children's safety in vehicles

The RACT has used National Road Safety Week to remind parents about the importance of child safety when they are travelling in a vehicle.

The organisation joined Tasmania Police and the Road Safety Advisory Council on-site at Moonah Primary School today to highlight the importance of properly measuring children for vehicle child restraints and the correct use of seatbelts.

RACT Community Manager Will Oakley said a correctly fitted child restraint could significantly reduce the risk of death or serious injury in the event of a road crash.

"Children should be seated in a properly installed booster until they are 145 cm tall," he said.

"It is important that any booster seat has good head support and can grow with the child.

"It is just as important to ensure any child seat is no older than 10 years as they deteriorate over time."

Mr Oakley said that just because a child was seven did not automatically mean they child should not be in a booster seat.

"Regardless of a child's age, a booster seat should be used until it has been outgrown."

He also warned parents against allowing children to sit in the front seat of a vehicle unless it was necessary.

"A child can legally sit in the front seat of the vehicle when they are seven, but the RACT recommends that this only occurs only when younger children are in the back seat," he said.

“The front seat poses increased safety risks for children as they are smaller, and so front airbags and dashboards pose a large danger in the event of a crash.

“If you have to place a child in the front seat, move the seat as far away from the dashboard and airbag as possible.”

Mr Oakley said it was important to know what to look for when checking if a child was ready to use an adult seatbelt:

- Place the child on the seat with their bottom firmly back and fit the seatbelt across the child.
- Check that the belt runs across the child’s shoulder and hips and that their legs bend over the end of the seat.
- If still unsure, please contact RACT for further advice.

Mr Oakley said Road Safety Week was also an important time to remind all road users of the importance of wearing seatbelts.

“The legal penalty for not wearing a seatbelt is \$300 and three demerit points, but the real penalty could be loss of a life or a serious injury.”

RACT is conducting a range of activities as part of Road Safety Week to raise awareness, including free child restraint checks in Hobart and Launceston and education programs in schools around the state.

Details about the RACT’s Road Safety Week activities can be found here:

<https://www.ract.com.au/road-safety-week2019>

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