



For: AUTO21

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AUTO21 DRIVES DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE CHILD SEAT IN PURSUIT OF CHILD SAFETY

WINDSOR, Ont., November 29, 2006 – Every year in Canada about 90 children under the age of 10 die in vehicle collisions – that’s three classrooms of children who will not see the fifth grade. To help reduce this tragic statistic, AUTO21 researchers embarked on a solution it championed in the form of an innovative, new backless booster seat called clek™, which was designed and engineered by Magna.

“If I could fix just one thing, I’d get school-aged kids into booster seats and keep them there until at least 80 pounds and 57 inches tall,” said Anne Snowdon, Ph.D., a University of Windsor professor of nursing and AUTO21 Health, Safety and Injury Prevention theme coordinator who worked closely with researchers and seating engineers to develop clek.

School-age kids need booster seats, but according to Safe Kids Canada, only about 28 per cent of Canadian children who need them use booster seats, largely due to parents thinking their child has outgrown the need for a car seat. However, Ontario and Quebec passed laws in 2005 to require the use of booster seats for children within certain age, height and weight parameters, and Nova Scotia is next with a law that goes into effect in January 2007.

“But legislation alone is not enough,” said Snowdon. “The total solution requires a combination of legislation; parent knowledge and seats that kids want to sit in. We believed we could improve proper booster seat usage through new seating products that parents and kids are more inclined to use.

“We approached Magna, which from an engineering and design view has a holistic understanding of the entire vehicle, to develop a booster seat to help improve these dismal usage statistics. More important, we believe that anything that encourages booster use inherently increases safety, so we wanted a seat that is easier to use by parents and liked by kids,” said Snowdon.

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KID APPROVAL REDUCES RESISTANCE TO BOOSTER USE

Clek was developed based on studies with parents and children. The automobile seating engineers at Magna applied the same design principles used in their traditional automotive seating business, such as occupant pressure-mapping, the use of premium automotive grade materials and ergonomic design. As a result, clek looks and feels like a real seat, offering improved comfort and ergonomic advantages that reduce pressure on the sciatic nerve and keep a child's legs and feet from going numb on longer car rides.

Kids love the grown-up look and choice of removable seat covers (currently pink or camouflage) to match their tastes and the handy side pockets to hold their stuff. Accessories bring the child into the selection-making process, and help overcome the stigma of "sitting in a baby seat" to make the decision to purchase a booster a bit easier for mom or dad.

The clek name originated with Canadian school kids who heard a "clek" sound made by the seat when it attaches to a vehicle's LATCH connection points.

CLEK "BOOSTS" CHILD SEAT PERFORMANCE

Key to the performance of clek is an integrated, rigid LATCH system that allows the booster to be secured directly to the vehicle seat structure, using the universal mounting system (UAS or LATCH) mandated on all vehicles manufactured after September 1, 2002. This security feature provides a stable seat for your child that is less likely to slide in a collision, eliminating the need for an anti-slip mat often purchased with traditional floating boosters. Clek is also the first booster seat to use a rigid connection system that eliminates the difficulties of tightening and loosening tether straps and makes installation a simple "clek," a very beneficial feature for families who take their booster seat in and out of vehicles.

The unique clek seat directly addresses the critical safety issue for children between four and nine years of age who are too old for infant seats but too young for proper protection with seat belts. The reason for the danger is the improper fit of a vehicle's safety belt system, which is designed to fit adults. This age group experiences about 10 times more injuries during car crashes than infants and toddlers.

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The clek booster seat raises the child up four inches for improved shoulder-belt fit and uses belt-positioning guides to help keep the lap belt positioned on a child's hip bones. The seat conforms to all applicable requirements of Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and bears the National Safety Mark.

With the season of winter driving still ahead, there's no better time to invest in clek for the child in your life between the ages of four and nine. The seats are available at Canadian Tire online or at stores across Canada for \$79.99 and will go on sale the week of December 10 for \$59.99.

"We believe that through greater comfort, improved convenience, and the fact that kids like it, the clek booster will encourage safe travel for our children," said Snowdon.

AUTO21 currently supports more that 230 researchers and nearly 450 student researchers working on 41 auto-related research and development projects at 42 Canadian universities and institutions. The projects are supported by more than \$12 million per year in combined public and private sector funding. Research is conducted in the areas of health, safety, and injury prevention; societal issues; materials and manufacturing; design processes; powertrains, fuels and emissions; and intelligent systems and sensors. AUTO21 is funded through the Networks of Centres of Excellence of Canada program. For more information, visit www.auto21.ca.

NOTE TO MEDIA: high-resolution photography of the clek booster seat is available for download at <http://clek.quell.com>.

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