

Case Study 13: Brenda

Child's age, weight, height

Brenda is a 4 year old female, 39 pounds, 3 feet tall

Medical Diagnosis/condition

Cerebral palsy

Reason for referral

Brenda's physician wanted her to be evaluated by an occupational therapist due to Brenda's lack of muscle control.

Current child safety restraint

Brenda was being transported in a van side facing in her wheelchair, which does not conform to best practice. Wheelchair securement positions are safer when the wheelchair and the person riding in the wheelchair are facing forward. Sled tests show that side facing wheelchairs are unstable and often collapse in a crash. The van Brenda was being transported in was not equipped with either a four point tie down system or a separate shoulder/lap belt. She only had a lap belt around the front of the frame of the wheelchair.



Other child passengers and restraints

None

Vehicle's year, make and model

1995 Ford custom van

Child's Seating Position in Vehicle D=driver

D		
		Brenda

Wheelchair misuse: Child being transported side facing in a wheelchair, without proper tie downs and a lap/shoulder belt.

Vehicle Issues

The was an older van with only the front passenger seat and a third row bench seat with only two seat belts. A locking clip was necessary to install the car seat issued to Brenda. Although the bench seat did not have headrests, the midpoint of the child's head was not above the seat back, as discussed in the owner's manual of the child safety seat..

Evaluation

It was determined that Brenda needed a large medical seat due to her lack of muscle control.

Outcome

Due to the expected lead time in obtaining a special needs car seat through insurance, a car safety seat with a higher weight harness was issued to Brenda to use until her special needs seat arrived. Her father was provided education about installation of the car safety seat and proper securement of a wheelchair in a van.