Case Study 9: Kentin

Child’s age, weight, height  
19 month-old male, 25 pounds, 36 inches

Medical Diagnosis/condition  
Spinal Muscle Atrophy (SMA), a neuromuscular disease in which the muscles weaken and waste away due to degeneration of motor neurons which are nerve cells in the spinal cord.

Reason for referral  
Kentin’s physician wanted an occupational therapy evaluation due to Kentin’s significant lack of muscle control and his being on a ventilator.

Current child safety restraint  
Rear-facing convertible child safety seat.

Other child passengers and restraints  
None

Vehicle Year, Make and Model  
1995, Chevy Tahoe

Child’s Seating Position in Vehicle (X)  

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Vehicle Issues  
None. The car seat has built-in lock offs.

Evaluation  
Kentin had almost out grown his current child passenger restraint in height. Due to his complex respiratory issues and significant muscle loss Kentin would benefit from a new car seat which could be slightly reclined when riding in the car. His family understood the benefits of rear-facing but since his mother traveled alone with him, she wanted him forward facing due to his respiratory condition.

Outcome  
The OT issued Kentin a new child passenger restraint named the Safe Seat manufactured by Graco. The Safe Seat is a forward facing only seat which can be positioned at different angles of recline. Kentin fit well in the car seat and, because of the recline, his head was no longer falling forward and compromising his airway. Kentin traveled with a ventilator, oxygen tank, suction machine, and an apnea monitor. An unoccupied seat belt was also used to secure some of Kentin’s medical equipment, while the rest was wedged on the floor.