

Alex Gets a Boost Before Blast Off!

(A Puppet Show to Promote Booster Seat Usage for Children Between 40 & 80 Pounds)
updated 12/12/01

Instructor's Guide



Texas Children's
Center for Childhood
Injury Prevention

Alex Gets a Boost Before Blast Off!

AUDIENCE/PURPOSE:

This class, for children generally between the ages of 4-8 years old & between 40 and 80 pounds, is intended to create a greater awareness of booster seats and their benefits.

OBJECTIVES:

As a result of seeing the puppet show, children will:

- Be able to state the safest place for children to ride in a car.
- Be able to recall at least one benefit of sitting in a booster seat when they ride in a car.
- Be able to explain why it is important to buckle up their seatbelt on each car ride.
- Think of car booster seats as “cool,” thus being open to the idea of riding in one.

CLASS SIZE & ARRANGEMENT:

Try to limit the class size to 20-25 children per session. Smaller groups work best. If the class is too large, the children tend to lose interest because they can't see the puppet well (as they would if they were up close) or are distracted by other children. Also, each classroom is different and your space may be limited.

NOTE: Discuss proper set up with the teacher beforehand! Make sure that there is a long (ie 5-6 foot long table of regular height) and an electrical outlet in the room. It also works best if (when teaching several sessions) you stay in one location and have the children come to you instead of having to set up for each and every performance.

TIME:

When scheduling a class, allow 35-40 minutes. The puppet show is approximately 12 minutes, but you will need to allow time for getting settled, introductions, questions and review at the end, etc. Time permitting, you might want to allow the children (1 boy and 1 girl) to try sitting in a booster seat or teach them Ozzie's song (see script or review at end of show for words).

NOTE: If you plan to teach multiple sessions, schedule 30 minute breaks between your classes to allow your arm to rest.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Astronaut puppet* (see photo at end of guide)
- Astronaut costume* (see photo at end of guide)
- 4 rubber bands to keep the gloves and boots from coming off the puppet
- Arm rod for astronaut puppet*
- Alien puppet* (see photo at end of guide)
- Audio-taped script*
- Easel (or someone/something to hold up the posters)*
- “Get a Boost Before Blast Off” coloring pages/coloring books*



- High back booster seat with a removable internal harness (you will use the webbing to make a lap and shoulder seatbelt) (see photo at end of guide)
- "Moon rock"* (see photo at end of guide)
- 2 posters (good view, bad view)*
regular size poster board (2 black, 2 white), clip art, glue, scissors
- Script (hard copy)
- Tape recorder
- Video-taped instructor's guide
- 2 ½-3" square Velcro for seatbelt buckle, lap/shoulder belt, for the booster seat, and for the back of the astronaut's helmet. (NOTE: If you order the costume from Clara Martin, it will come with a piece of white Velcro (rough side) sewn to the back of the helmet.) You will want to place black Velcro (fuzzy side) on the booster seat itself to keep the puppet's head from flopping forward while he sits in the booster seat. We used a heavy duty needle and thread to attach it. (see photo at end of guide)
- ½ bag of cotton balls or stuffing placed in a gallon size ziplock bag to make astronaut puppet's tummy more full (optional). Attach to puppet himself with 2 safety pins.
- Table
- An assistant to start the cassette tape and/or to hold up posters (optional but HIGHLY recommended)
- Class evaluations to be completed by the teacher (optional)
- Pre/post tests for children (optional)

(* = see end of manual for list of sources)

HINTS FOR NEW PUPPETEERS:

- View the video taped instructor's guide to see a puppet show performance!
(Our evaluators highly recommend watching the tape!)
- PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE! The more familiar you are with the script, the better your performance will be.
(Our evaluators stressed that practicing **more** than 2-3x is a **MUST!!!**)
- Decide which hand you will use to operate the puppet's mouth movements.
EX: Right hand moves puppet's mouth; left hand moves the puppet's arm. (This will be important when deciding where to place the booster seat and posters.)
- When entering the classroom, leave Alex in his booster seat near the door so the children are less likely to see him. (One of our evaluators suggested "hiding" him in a booster seat box). You will "fly" him into the classroom later as the audio tape begins. Everything else (tape recorder, posters, moon rock and Ozzie) can be set up in the performance area.
- Designate a volunteer to help with the show. Their 2 main responsibilities would be to start the audio tape at the beginning and hold up the 2 posters at the appropriate times (if you do not have an easel).



- Proper set up is CRITICAL!!! It works best if you perform the show while standing behind a table that serves as a stage for the puppet to walk on. (*Table height and length are very important!*) When you “fly” the puppet and his booster seat into the performance area at the beginning of the show, you will “land” the booster seat on the end of the table where the puppet can most easily point to it. Have the posters on the opposite end of the table on an easel, or ask the volunteer to hold up the posters during the show.

This means: If your right hand operates the puppet’s mouth, place the booster seat on your left. Because your left hand will be operating the puppet’s left hand, he will be able to more easily point to his booster seat if it is to the left side. Place the posters to your right side and Ozzie & moon rock to your left.

- Hide Ozzie and the moon rock in a bag (on or under the table).
- Children should sit on the floor.
- Find a professional puppet group or a puppet guild in your area and talk with the puppeteers. (Try <http://www.puppeteers.org>).
- Attend puppet shows the group may offer.
- Ask puppeteers for tips on how to make the puppet come alive. **EXAMPLES:** Keep the eyes of the puppet visible to the audience: Use oversized props and over-exaggerate movements.

TOTAL COST:

Total cost of the show (including posters, tape recorder etc) will vary depending on what you decide to use. There is lots of room for creativity!
Ours was approximately \$335.00 (includes cost of costume)

***SOURCES:**

We obtained our materials from the following sources:

Astronaut Puppet:

(see photo at end of guide)

Call Maher Studios (303) 346-6819 for a current catalog

Web site: <http://www.maherstudios.com>

Our puppet, Michael, Hispanic version: \$99.95

NOTE: Some of our evaluators used the African American version and found that this puppet’s hair falls out.

Astronaut Costume:

(see photo at end of guide)

The costume is an alteration of McCall’s Pattern #9493 and Simplicity #9407.

If you would like a copy of the pattern, please call Sarah Gangross at (832) 824-2976 or email her at segangro@texaschildrenshospital.org.

If you would like to have the costume made for you, contact Clara Martin at (281) 970-9140. The costumes cost \$110.00 each and will fit a puppet that is 32” tall.



Arm rods for astronaut puppet: (to make moving the puppet's arms more realistic)

Son Shine Puppet Co.
1926 7th Street
PO Box 6203
Rockford, IL 61125
800-257-8773

Arm rods: \$3 each.

Audio tape of puppet show and video-taped instructor's guide:

Call Sarah Gangross at 832-824-2976 or e-mail at segangro@texaschildrenshospital.org
Our evaluators HIGHLY recommended the video-tape. Some said that it was "how (they) learned to do the show."

Alien Puppet:

(see photo at end of guide)

Call One Way Street Inc. 303-790-1188 for a current catalog
Web site: <http://www.onewaystreet.com>

You can choose any friendly looking alien. Our puppet "Ozzie" was chosen by children in our focus groups and is featured in the coloring book
"Ozzie": \$20.00

Coloring books/Coloring Pages:

2 coloring pages may be downloaded from the Texas Children's Hospital web site
<http://www.texaschildrenshospital.org/InjuryPrevention> You may have coloring books printed (in English or Spanish) though Southwest Precision Printers for a fee.
Contact David Harris @ 713-777-3333 or 1-800-437-3337.

22" Table Easel (or one that will hold up regular size poster board):

Michael's \$12.00

High back belt positioning booster seat (any): (see photo at end of guide)

Buy a high back booster seat with a removable internal harness system. Ours is a Cosco high back booster seat. Remove the harness system and use the webbing to make a lap/shoulder belt. Velcro attached to the bottom side of the buckle and where the latch plate would be can be used to make the seatbelt look like it is buckled. (see photo at end of guide)

If your high back booster seat does not have a removable harness system, try using 2" wide ribbon for the seatbelt.

Detailed instructions for making the lap/shoulder belt:

You'll need to make your own lap and shoulder belt. You will need clear packing tape or duct tape, a safety pin, 2 ½ -3" squares of Velcro and a heavy duty needle and thread to do this.

- Remove the webbing from the internal harness system on the high back booster



- and remove all the hardware from the harness straps (retainer clip and latch plates)
- Remove the buckle from the booster seat.
 - Attach the buckle first. If you plan to operate Alex's mouth with your right hand and move his left arm with your left hand, you will place the booster seat to your left where he can easily point to it. It seems to work best to attach the buckle to the side of the booster that will be closest to you as you perform. We attached ours to the plastic shell with clear packing tape. Feed the tape through the loop on the webbing. (see photo at end of guide)
 - Take the long piece of webbing and attach the end with the loop (see photo at end of guide) to the second notch of the comfort guide on the opposite side of the seat where you have attached the buckle.
 - Put Alex in his seat and pull the webbing across his chest to the buckle. Leave about an inch and a half extra to attach under the buckle later with Velcro. Fold the webbing back on itself and safety pin it together on the underside of the webbing. Make the webbing go across the puppet's lap so it looks like the lap belt.
 - Next, cut 2 pieces (1 rough, 1 fuzzy) of adhesive backed Velcro to fit the back of the buckle.
 - Attach the rough piece of the Velcro to the bottom side of the buckle (see photo at end of guide)
 - Attach the fuzzy piece of Velcro to the top side of the folded over portion of webbing. (see photo at end of guide)
 - "Buckle" Alex in by putting the 2 pieces of Velcro together.
 - Pull the webbing snugly over Alex's lap. Tip the booster seat back (with Alex in it) and tie (or sew) the 2 pieces of webbing ---(one from the buckle and one from his lap/shoulder belt) ---together. Don't make it too snug because it is easier to buckle Alex in during a performance if it is not too tight. (see photo at end of guide)
 - Tape the webbing securely to the bottom of the seat. You can cut off any excess webbing (see photo at end of guide)
 - Once you're sure the belt fits right, sew the Velcro on the "lap/shoulder belt" to the webbing using heavy duty thread and a strong needle. Otherwise, it will come off.

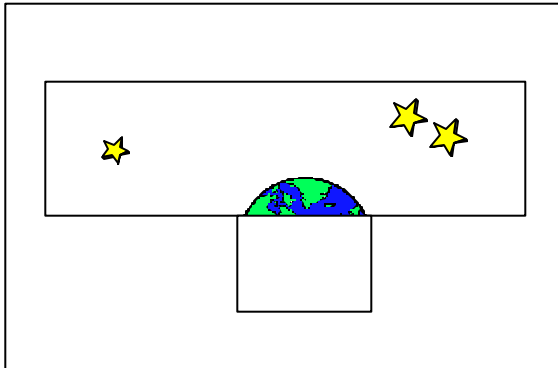
"Moon rock"--- It's up to you! (see photo at end of guide)

Try polished stones available at craft stores or museum gift shops, or use volcanic rocks from pet stores. We have found that coral used in fish aquariums is not "believable." You could also make a moon rock out of paper mache and a ball of wadded up newspaper. Paint with glitter paint. Make sure whatever you use is large enough for the children to see. (Over-sized props are great!)

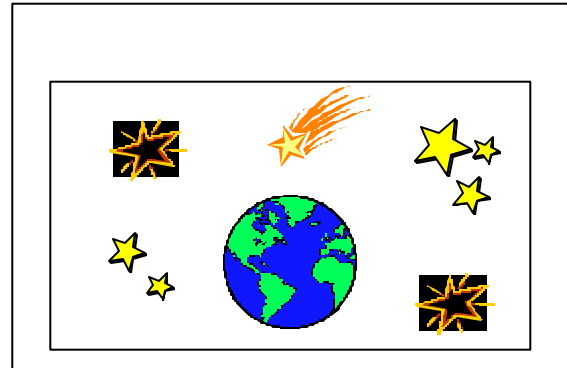
Posters (we made ours):

See diagrams below. Be sure to include the same elements that are mentioned in the puppet show script (comets, Earth, stars). You will also want to laminate these.

You will need: 4 pieces of regular size poster board (2 white, 2 black)
Clip Art or construction paper
Glue
Scissors



Before Booster View



After Booster View

Several of our evaluators suggested:

- *Make the poster double sided (“before” view on 1 side and “after” view on the other side) to reduce the number of materials you will need to carry with you to the classroom.*
- *Try using a thick laminating material or just use foam board so the poster will not be flimsy.*

OTHER SUGGESTED MATERIALS:

- *One of our evaluators used an empty booster seat box to “hide” Alex in so that students passing by would not see Alex before the show. It also helped with the transport of all of the materials needed for the show.*
- *Attach streamers to Alex’s booster seat.*



INTRODUCTION

BEFORE YOU START:

- *Have Alex sitting in his booster seat (all buckled up) in the back of the classroom or just outside the door.*
- *Set up the tape recorder and posters (or designate someone to hold them up at the appropriate times).*
- *Place Ozzie (face down) and the moon rock in the presentation area but out of sight (maybe hide them or put them in a bag).*

TIP: *It works best to “land” the seat on a table so that all children will be able to see.*

(Presenter's Dialogue)

(Presenter to class):

Good morning. My name is _____ and I work at _____. I brought a special guest with me today who wants to talk with you about traveling safely.

But first!

How many of you ride in a car (or a truck or a van) to get to where you're going (like home, school, the store...)? Raise your hand.

Do you **ALWAYS** buckle your seat belt when you ride in the car? Raise your hand if you do.

Do any of you sit in a booster seat when you ride in the car? (or do you know what a booster seat is?) Raise your hand.

How old are you all?

I brought my friend Alex the Astronaut with me today.

Alex is about _____ years old too (just like you) and he wants to tell you about the seat he sits in when he travels. It's called a booster seat. It is for big kids just like you. Alex is going to tell you all about the great things it does for him!

It helps him see out the window better and

It also keeps the seatbelt from rubbing against his neck!

Does that ever happen to anyone here?---Raise your hand if it does!

Are you ready to meet Alex?



One more thing I need to tell you before I go and get Alex is that you have to be very quiet while he is talking. He might ask you some questions, and it's OK to answer the question or raise your hand ***only IF what he is asking applies to you.*** It is ***strongly suggested that you give them an example like: "Raise your hand IF you like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches? Only the kids that like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches should have their hand raised.(Make sure that you stress this or the children will all raise their hands as soon as they hear Alex say "Raise your hand..." They do not wait to hear "if....")***.

Other than that, you must be quiet so you don't miss what Alex is saying. (He can't go back and repeat things.)

OK, let me go and see if Alex is ready...

- *Go to the back of the classroom and pick up Alex who should be buckled up in his booster seat.*
- *It is **very** helpful if someone else can start the tape for you. As the music starts (lasts a total of 40 seconds), "fly" Alex to the performance area. As you start to hear the "spaceship landing" (this sound begins 20 seconds into the music or after the music repeats 2 times):*
 - *land Alex in the booster*
 - *unbuckle him*
 - *take him out of the seat*
 - ***RE-BUCKLE HIS SEATBELT***
 - *put him on your hand*
 - *remove his helmet. (just slide it off his head, don't unbuckle it)*

NOTE: This sequence requires PRACTICE!!!

TIP: As you make the puppet come alive, make sure he is not just "floating" but that he "walks" on the table.



Alex Gets a Boost Before Blast Off!

Performance time: 12 minutes

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Intro music for a total of 40 seconds. Spaceship landing music starts at 20 sec (or after the music repeats two times).

HINT: "Fly" Alex into the classroom in his booster seat. As you hear the "ship landing sound," land him, unbuckle and take him out of the booster seat, **RE-BUCKLE** his seatbelt, put him on your hand and remove his helmet. (NOTE: This requires practice!!!)

Alex: Hello boys & girls! It's me! Alex the Astronaut!
(Alex waves to audience)

Alex: It's so good to be back on Earth! I just got back from outer space. It was a safe and exciting trip!

Alex: Here on Earth, we travel in cars and trucks!
(Car noises in background; Alex looks from side to side)
When I go to outer space, I go in a spaceship!
(Blast-off sounds in background; Alex looks up toward the sky)

Alex: In space, there isn't any gravity! If I wasn't buckled up, I would just float around--like this! (Eerie space music in background; Alex "floats" as he talks.) But when you're in a car, you don't want to be able to float around!

Alex: What if there was a crash???(Sound of a crash; Alex could fly forward, may duck, or cover his head and face)
That's what would happen . . . You'd go flying right through the window—and THAT would be bad news!

Alex: See this seatbelt?
(There is a brief pause for time to pick up seatbelt on booster seat)
This is MY seatbelt! It's what I wear to keep myself in place in the spaceship!----
--No matter how well my pilot drives or even if I'm just going on a short mission!
I always wear it!--- You never know what could happen! You always have to be prepared!
(Alex may pat his leg for emphasis as he says, "You always have to be prepared!")

Alex: **RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU BUCKLE UP YOUR SEATBELT WHEN YOU RIDE IN THE CAR!I see.It's always good to wear your seat belt!**
(Alex looks out to audience and raises his hand too)

Alex: You should always hear the seatbelt "CLICK" before your pilot takes off. It should sound like this--- Listen! (There is a brief pause for time to move toward the seatbelt and touch it; clicking sound)



Alex: Did you hear it? I *love* that sound! *(Alex puts his hand to his heart)*
It's the "sound of safety!" Let me do it again!!!
(Brief pause for time to move to the booster seat and seatbelt; clicking sound again)
You should hear that click for every person in your car before take-off!
(Series of seatbelt clicks)

Alex: Oh! Oh! *(Alex jumps up and down)* This seat I sit in is sooo cool!

Alex: It's called a booster seat *(Alex points to seat, touches it)* and it is **OUT OF THIS WORLD AWESOME!**

Alex: It helps me sit up nice and tall so I can see out the window! *(Alex stands up tall)*

Alex: I used to have trouble seeing out the window. I couldn't see a thing!
It was BORING!! *(Alex hangs his head)*

Here is a picture of all I saw. *(Alex points and looks at the poster of stars only with the inside of the spaceship & looks back at audience)*

Alex: Now! I sit in my booster seat and I get to see EVERYTHING! Here's what I get to see now! *(Music clues puppeteer to flip to next poster)*
A much better view, don't you think? *(pauses & looks at picture, points)*
See the comets, the Earth, see the stars?... I can see it ALL from my booster seat!

Alex: I brought back a souvenir too!
Hey! ... *(Alex turns to puppeteer)* Show them my moon rock!

(Sound of wind chimes as puppeteer shows moon rock)

Alex: I LOVE my booster seat! *(Alex touches seat)* Sitting up high keeps the seat belt from rubbing on my neck! *(Alex motions to neck)*

Alex: RAISE YOUR HAND IF THE SEAT BELT RUBS ON **YOUR** NECK WHEN YOU WEAR YOUR SEATBELT!..... *(Alex raises his hand)* Yup, uh huh...

Alex: My booster seat fixes that little problem! *(Alex pats booster seat)*

It'll keep you safe, make you sit up nice and tall so you can see out the window better **AND** it helps keep that seatbelt from rubbing on your neck!

Alex: And another thing boys and girls! I ALWAYS sit in the BACK seat!
(Alex motions his hand over shoulder) It's the safest place for kids like you and me!

The front seat is for grown-up pilots like moms and dads!

Alex: RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU SIT IN THE BACK SEAT IN YOUR CAR!
(Alex raises his hand) Well you should! The back seat is the safest!



(Sound of an alien's spaceship landing; As this landing sound starts, put Ozzie on your free hand)

Alex: Hey look! It's my friend Ozzie from outer space! He's here to visit us!

Alex: *(looking at Ozzie)* Hey Ozzie! Welcome to Earth!

Ozzie: *(looking at Alex)* Thank you Alex! It's good to be here!

Alex: Boys and girls, wave to Ozzie!!
(Ozzie jumps up and down and into the booster seat)

Alex: He really likes my booster seat!

Ozzie: *(looking at Alex)* I love it! Can I take it home with me?

Alex: *(looking at Ozzie)* No you silly alien! But you can ask the grown-up you live with to get you one!

Alex: *(looking at audience)* Boys and girls, when Ozzie sits in his booster seat, will he be able to see out the window better? *(Alex nods his head "yes" and kids answer "yes")*

Alex: Will the booster seat keep that seatbelt off his neck?
(Alex nods his head "yes" and kids answer "yes")

Ozzie: What's this? What's this? What's this? What's this?
(Ozzie grabs seatbelt with his mouth)

Alex: Duh! Boys and girls! Tell Ozzie what that is! *(kids say "seat belt")* That's right!
It's a seatbelt! You use it to buckle up!!!

Alex: *(looking at Ozzie)* Now Ozzie, where is the safest place for kids to ride when they're in the car?

Ozzie: Uhhhh... Hmmm...

Alex: Can you tell him kids? *(kids say "back seat")*

Alex: That's right kids! The back seat is the safest place to sit!
The front is for grown-ups and the driver!!

Ozzie: Oh, OK! Thank you sooo much! I'm going back to MY planet to teach my family how to be safe by buckling up in booster seats. You should tell your family too!
You don't want them to forget! *(whispers)* They might not even know!



Ozzie: Here's a song to help everyone remember how to stay safe!
(to *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*)

You can be safer off than you are
Just wear your seatbelt in your car

If you're small use a booster seat too,
Won't rub your neck and gives you a view

And the back seat is safer by far,
Just buckle up when in your car!

Ozzie: BEEP PEEP BEEP! (*Ozzie disappears with the sound of a spaceship taking off...*)

Alex: 'Bye Ozzie! (*Alex waves*)...

Alex: Now everyone knows how to stay safe and all about booster seats! Let's take a pledge about traveling safely. (*Alex raises his hand and clears his throat*)
Everyone raise your hand and repeat after me!

Alex: I promise... (*kids repeat*)
That I will always... (*kids repeat*)
On each and every trip... (*kids repeat*)
Whether it's to the store or to the moon... (*kids repeat*)
Buckle my seat belt... (*kids repeat*)
And sit in the back seat... (*kids repeat*)

Alex: YEA!!! All right! I think you've got it!
Well, that's all the time we have today. I am buckling up and blasting off now!
(*Music begins as Alex salutes and walks towards his booster seat*)

Alex: Bye!.....Bye everyone!.....Bye now!
(*Alex waves*)

Puppeteer puts Alex in his booster seat with his helmet on and buckles his seatbelt before "flying" him to the back of the classroom (or to a place where he is out of sight). Puppeteer returns to review with the class.

Music lasts for 45 seconds.



REVIEW/CLOSING ***(Presenter's Dialogue)***

Make sure that you put Alex (buckled up in his booster) in a place where he will not be a distraction. You might "fly" him in his booster to the door, or simply turn him around in his booster seat so the kids cannot look at him during the review.

Remember to give the children lots of positive reinforcement for correct answers!

(Presenter to class):

Did you like the puppet show? Let's review to see how well you listened!

What should you wear when you ride in the car on each and every trip?

(SEAT BELT)

(If the class has trouble responding, give them choices. For example, should you wear a helmet or a seat belt every time you ride in the car?)

Good! You were listening....

Where is the safest place for kids to ride in a car?

(BACK SEAT)

(If kids have trouble responding, give them choices. For example, should kids ride in the front seat or the back seat?)

Great!

If you sat in a booster seat like Alex does, would you be able to see out the window better?

(YES)

Does the seatbelt ever rub against your neck?

(YES)

OR: Do any of you put the seatbelt under your arm or behind your back? That is not safe.

If you sit in a booster seat like Alex does, do you think it would help keep that seatbelt from rubbing against your neck?

(YES)

Raise your hand if you think that you would like to ride in a booster seat of your very own!

Super!

Ok, now there's one more thing you can do when you get in your car! Do you know what it is?



You can be a **seat belt captain**. It is the seat belt captain's job to make sure that everyone in the car buckles their seat belt before the car moves. That means that you need to make sure that even your mom and dad buckle up! Sometimes they forget and you have to remind them! Do you think that you can be the seat belt captain in your car?

GREAT!

OK boys and girls, you have been good listeners! Thank you for inviting us! We have to go now and talk to some other children so we can teach them how to be safe too!

Pass out coloring pages/ books (if available) to the children and encourage them to share it with their family.

Time permitting, you might:

- *Allow the children to take turns sitting in the booster seat/trying it out.*
- *Teach the children Ozzie's song. (to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)*

*You can be safer off than you are
Just wear your seatbelt in your car*

*If you're small use a booster seat too,
Won't rub your neck and gives you a view*

*And the back seat is safer by far,
Just buckle up when in your car!*

Suggestion: Give the words to the song to the teacher and have the class learn the song later. They can invite you back on another day and sing the song to you. You could reward them with pencils or stickers.

PICTURES



Alex, High Back Booster, Ozzie



Buckle (taped through loop)



Webbing looped at comfort guide; Velcro on back of seat to hold Alex's head



Velcro on back of buckle and on "lap/shoulder" belt



tie and tape to bottom of seat



Soft Ball size Moon Rock (paper mache, glitter paint)



Additional Comments from our evaluators:

Don't do more than 4 classes in a day!

The table you use makes a big difference!

Excellent program! The kids and teachers love it!

Teachers say the class is very age appropriate.

Kids love Ozzie!

Kids love Ozzie's song!

Kids always ask if the moon rock is real.

Practicing is important!