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April 18, 2026

Contact: Tracy LeMaire  
National Child Passenger Safety Board Secretariat  
Program Manager, National Safety Council  
[secretariat@cpsboard.org](mailto:secretariat@cpsboard.org)

### **Texas AgriLife Agent Named Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year**

Hicks recognized for work in Ellis County and across the state of Texas

ITASCA, IL — When an area of need was identified, a call went out. Danae Hicks, an agent with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, answered that call.

Although her professional background had long centered on chronic disease, healthy aging and emergency preparedness, Hicks saw an opportunity to shift her focus. She stepped in to expand child passenger safety education in Ellis County, a North-Central Texas region where families craved greater access to safety resources, training and reliable information.

Today, her commitment and leadership have earned her recognition as the National Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year. The award is presented by the [National Child Passenger Safety Board](#) and sponsored by [Toyota Motor North America](#).

#### **How it Started**

Hicks, an AgriLife program specialist and resident of Athens, Texas, was first approached by the Passenger Safety KidSafe Initiatives team with Texas A&M AgriLife in fall 2022. Recognizing the opportunity to improve community safety, she enrolled in a Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training Course the following spring. Soon after earning her wings as a Technician, she partnered with AgriLife Program Coordinator Megan Hackworth, beginning a collaboration that would expand the region's child passenger safety efforts.

#### **Early Impact**

Together, Hicks and Hackworth formed a partnership with Red Oak Independent School District. In August 2023, they:

- Educated more than 40 parents
- Distributed 43 booster seats to children at a back-to-school event

Hicks was hooked — and families felt the immediate benefit.

She quickly saw how deeply her efforts resonated with parents and caregivers. The feedback affirmed that what she was doing mattered — and that it was making families safer.

## **Rapid Growth, Expanding Influence**

Since that early success, Hicks' work has grown in scope and impact. Her focus now includes developing a mentorship program for Child Passenger Safety Technicians across the state of Texas. She also supports Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents at car seat inspection stations, while producing educational content for social media and mass media outlets.

Hicks' leadership in the field continues to accelerate as she works toward becoming a Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor.

"It's such a fulfilling position where I still get to interact with the public for car seat inspections and events," Hicks said of her work in passenger safety through AgriLife's KidsSafe Initiatives. "I'm also able to support more than 1,600 Child Passenger Safety Technicians across the state of Texas with mentoring, social media posts, press releases and support for recertification."

## **Growing Presence Across Ellis County**

Hicks remains deeply committed to advocating for the correct use of car seats and booster seats. As a state CPS specialist, she focuses outreach efforts on a number of areas:

- Adoption agencies
- Pregnancy centers
- Health and safety fairs
- Educational presentations
- Community-based support events

Additionally, she is developing a car seat inspection station through the Ennis Fire Department, creating a consistent, reliable access point for families needing hands-on support.

"It's inspiring to see how much of a difference one person can make in the lives of so many others," said National Child Passenger Safety Board Chair Kristel Robison. "Danae Hicks has clearly found her calling. We're proud to recognize her for her achievements. We look forward to seeing her future work in child passenger safety."

## **About Danae Hicks**

Away from her professional role, Hicks enjoys life on the family farm with her husband, Sawyer, and their two daughters, Charlotte, 5, and Olivia 2. Their German shepherd, Tanner, is equally adored. In her spare time, Danae volunteers at her daughters' schools and enjoys photography as a creative outlet.

## **About the National Child Passenger Safety Board**

The National Child Passenger Safety Board's mission is to save lives and prevent injuries by promoting child passenger safety through education, mentorship, engagement and innovation. The Board works with key partners, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Safety Council and Safe Kids Worldwide. For more information about child passenger safety or the National CPS Board, please visit the Board's website: [cpsboard.org](https://cpsboard.org)