## Deaths and Injuries

- In 2004, an estimated 214,000 children ages 14 and under were injured as occupants in motor vehicle-related crashes.\(^1,2\)
- Inappropriately restrained children are nearly three and a half times more likely to be seriously injured in a crash than their appropriately restrained counterparts.\(^1\)
- In 2004, an average of 6 children 0-14 years old were killed and 673 were injured everyday in motor vehicle crashes.\(^2\)
- An estimated 85% of children who are placed in child safety seats and booster seats are improperly restrained.\(^3\)
- Approximately 14% of children ages 14 and under ride unrestrained, placing them at twice the risk of death and injury of those riding restrained.\(^4\)
- A third of children (33%) age 14 and under ride in the wrong restraint type for their age and size.\(^5\)
- In the United States during 2004, there were 495 passenger vehicle occupant fatalities among children under 5 years of age. Of those 495 fatalities, an estimated 178 (36%) were totally unrestrained.\(^6\)
- Since 1990, there have been 164 fatal injuries to children related to airbags. Almost all children killed by passenger air bags were either unrestrained or improperly restrained at the time of the crash.\(^7\)
- As of July 2005, only 33 States and the District of Columbia included provisions requiring booster seats in their child restraint laws and not all laws cover all children who should be in booster seats.\(^8\)

## Restraint Use and Effectiveness

- It is estimated that children ages 12 and under are 36% less likely to die in a crash if seated in the rear of a passenger vehicle than if seated in the front seat.\(^1\)
- Child safety seats are extremely effective when correctly installed and used in passenger cars, reducing the risk of death by 71 percent for infants and 54 percent for children ages 1 to 4, and reducing the need for hospitalization by 69 percent for children ages 4 and under.\(^1\)
- Restraint status of the driver is positively associated with child restraint use. Nearly 40% of children riding with unbelted drivers were completely unrestrained, compared with only 5 percent of children riding with belted drivers.\(^1\)
- For children 4 to 7 years, belt-positioning booster seats reduce injury risk by 59% compared to safety belts alone.\(^7\)

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*Emergency nurses have an obligation to educate other health professionals and the public on healthy and safe lifestyles. In emergency departments, much of the traumas that are seen are preventable. It is often impossible to repair the broken bodies and shattered lives that result from trauma. A general goal of the ENA Injury Prevention Institute /EN CARE is to reduce preventable injuries and deaths by raising awareness, providing education, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*
Every child should be restrained in a child safety seat, booster seat, or with a lap/shoulder belt appropriate for their age and body size, in the back seat whenever possible.4,9

Children in rear-facing child seats should never be placed in the front seat of vehicles equipped with passenger air bags. The impact of a deploying air bag striking a rear-facing child seat could result in severe injury and death.2

NEVER carry an infant or child in your arms if the vehicle is moving.10

NEVER allow a child to place a seat belt behind his back or under his arm.10

NHTSA's 4 Steps for Kids guidelines explain which restraint should be used for each stage of a child's development. The 4 Steps are:

- Infants should be in a rear-facing safety seat installed in the back seat (center seat preferably) from birth to at least one year old and at least 20 pounds (in a safety seat that accommodates higher rear-facing weights, the infant should remain rear-facing until reaching the maximum weight for the safety seat).11,12
- Forward-facing toddler seats installed in the back seat from age one to about age four and 20 to 40 pounds.11,12
- Booster seats in the back seat from about age four and 40 pounds to at least age 8, unless 4'9” tall.11,12
- Safety belts should be used at age eight or older or if the child is taller than 4’9”. All children 12 and under should ride in the back seat.11,12

A booster seat should be used when the child has outgrown a convertible safety seat, but is too small to fit properly in a vehicle safety belt. A booster seat raises a child up so that the safety belt fits properly.11

Avoid using after market products such as shoulder belt-positioning devices, infant head-positioning pads and head rests, seat saver rubber and plastic mats, toys that attach to child restraints, safety belt buckle covers, and safety belt locking devices since there are no federal standards for testing or regulating such products.13

Do not place the child in the seat with a lot of padding or with a thick snowsuit; in a crash, the child can slip right out of the extra padding — and thus out of the seat.10

Only buy a child safety seat with a certification label that shows that it meets or exceeds Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 213.9

Call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Auto Safety Hotline (1-800-424-9393) to see if any recalls or safety notices have been issued on your child safety seat.9,13

### Child Passenger Safety Prevention Tips

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Type of Seat</th>
<th>Seat Position</th>
<th>Always Make Sure</th>
<th>WARNING</th>
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<tr>
<td>Birth to 1 year AND up to 20-22 lbs.</td>
<td>Infant only or rear-facing convertible</td>
<td>Rear-facing only</td>
<td>Children to one year and up to 20 lbs. in rear-facing seats</td>
<td>All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 1 year AND over 20 lbs.-40 lbs.</td>
<td>Convertible / Forward-facing</td>
<td>Forward-facing</td>
<td>Harness straps should be at or above shoulders</td>
<td>All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 40 lbs.</td>
<td>Belt positioning booster seat</td>
<td>Forward-facing</td>
<td>Most seats require top slot for forward-facing</td>
<td>All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat</td>
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CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY FACTS

REFERENCES


