

**TALKING POINTS**  
**CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK (BOOSTER SEATS)**  
**FEBRUARY 12-17, 2006**

**Background:**

**[Booster Seat]** – In recent years, great advances have been made in protecting child passengers. While 98 percent of America’s infants (under age 1) and 89 percent of children ages 1 to 4 are now regularly restrained, far too few kids age 4 to 8 are restrained *properly* for their size and age.

NHTSA estimates that only 10-20 percent of children ages 4 to 8 who should be using booster seats to protect them are actually *in* them. This puts children at an unnecessary risk of being injured or killed in crashes because they are riding in an adult safety belt which doesn’t fit or protect them correctly.

In addition, too many children ride in the front seat even though the back seat is the safest place for all children to ride. Kids who have outgrown their child safety seat but are under 4’9” tall, need to be in a booster seat. Parents should follow NHTSA’s “**4 Steps for Kids**” as their children grow to ensure maximum child passenger safety.

**[Child Passenger Safety Week]** – This year to commemorate Child Passenger Safety Week (February 12-18), the main objective is to remind all parents and caregivers responsible for children traveling in motor vehicles that if their children have outgrown their child safety seat but are under 4’9” tall, they need to be in a booster seat. There are “**4 Steps for Kids**” that all parents should follow to ensure maximum child passenger safety.



**Talking Points:**

- Every year, many children are needlessly injured (and killed in car crashes). Children ages 4 to 8 who use booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a safety belt, according to a study by Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

- A positive relationship between drivers using safety belts and children being restrained shows 92 percent of the children who were transported by belted drivers were restrained, compared to only 62 percent of the children transported by unbelted drivers.
  - Children are often moved prematurely to the adult safety belts instead of to a booster seat after outgrowing their forward-facing restraint, exposing them to great risk of serious injury and death.
  - Booster Seat use – estimated at only 10 to 20 percent nationwide – remains unacceptably low.
  - According to NHTSA, motor vehicle traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for every age 3 through 33.
  - In 2004, 350 child passengers ages 4 to 8 died in crashes and 53,000 were injured in crashes, virtually unchanged from 2003. 50 percent of the child occupants aged 4 to 8 who died in crashes in 2004 were unrestrained.
  - A Booster Seat raises your child up so that the safety belt fits right – and can better protect your child. Kids shorter than 4’9” tall need a “boost” to ensure the safety belt will fit securely across their chests and low and snug across their hips to prevent serious injuries, possible ejection, and death in the event of a crash.
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- For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers should follow the **4 Steps for Kids**:
    1. Use rear-facing infant seats in the back seat from birth to at least one year of age and at least 20 pounds;
    2. Use forward-facing toddler seats in the back seat from age one and 20 pounds to about age four and 40 pounds;
    3. Use booster seats in the back seat from about age four to at least age eight—unless the child is 4’ 9” or taller; and
    4. Use safety belts in the back seat at age eight or older or taller than 4’ 9”.

*It is imperative to remember that all children under age 13 should ride in the back seat.*