Health Behavior

Child passenger safety

In 2014, 98% of children from birth to four years of age were observed riding in a motor vehicle properly restrained. However, for children age four to eight years of age only 85% were properly restrained. This was a slight decline from 88% in 2013.

Children four to eight years of age should be properly restrained in a booster seat or car seat with a harness rated to higher weights. Moving these children into an adult safety belt is not proper restraint.

Car seats are a proven strategy for protecting child passengers. Correctly using an appropriate car seat for a child’s age and development can be a challenge. Support for families is available from many sources including local certified child passenger safety technicians. Families are encouraged to attend a car seat checkup event to be sure they are using their car seat correctly.

FIGURE 1
Car restraint use among children age 4 to 8 years, Oregon, 2013–2014

Source: Oregon Occupant Protection Observation Study, Oregon Department of Transportation
Oregon law requires children less than forty pounds be restrained in a child seat. Children under one year or weighing less than twenty pounds must be restrained in a rear-facing child seat. A child over forty pounds must be restrained in either a child seat or a booster seat appropriate for their size until they reach age eight or 4’ 9” tall AND the adult belt system fits them correctly.

Oregon law requires “proper fit” which means the lap belt of the safety belt or child seat harness is positioned low across the thighs and the shoulder belt or child seat harness is positioned over the collarbone and away from the neck.

Additional Resources: ODOT Occupant Protection Program and Occupant Protection, ODOT Transportation Safety Action Plan

About the Data: Data source is the Oregon Occupant Protection Observation Study, Oregon Department of Transportation. Data include percent of observed correct use.

For More Information Contact: Ruth Harshfield, ruth.harshfield@state.or.us

Date Updated: July 14, 2014