

SafetyBeltSafe News

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■ Who is at Risk?

Notes from Lifesavers '13

Michelle Macy, ER MD, was concerned that so many children dying in crashes were unrestrained and that older children were exhibiting higher injury rates. Thus, she began research to identify high-risk youngsters, finding African-American and Latino children more likely to ride forward-facing before age 1, in a booster before age 4, and a belt before age 8 in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)-generated NSUBS data (*see pg. 2*). As a whole, the report for 2011 is positive, with statistically significant gains in properly restrained children at most age levels. But Dr. Macy reviewed the 2007-2009 reports, finding a consistent pattern for children who were unrestrained.

Key factors were an unrestrained driver, a child over age 3 in front, four or more passengers, and a member of a minority group. Also there were few children facing rear after age 1. After age 5, front seat travel appeared to be associated with an unrestrained Latino driver and fewer than three passengers.

The need for outreach in these communities is reflected in the expanding Toyota program based in children's hospitals in urban areas. Beginning with Cincinnati, Buckle Up for Life is being replicated in Los Angeles County by Children's Hospital Los Angeles, among other locations.

Another key group for outreach are refugees who are resettled throughout the U.S. A moving description by Sarah Haverstock of SAFE KIDS in Nashville, TN, of providing child passenger safety (CPS) education to Burmese and Somali Bantu families stressed their high level of receptivity. To address finding and reaching these newcomers, Haverstock reported that nine non-profit agencies contract with the U.S. State Department to ease resettlement; they also provide interpreters. Haverstock found that very basic education, stressing pictures and ending with hands-on encounters with safety seats, fit the bill, although she stressed that CPS was the final class of 9 different injury prevention programs. Understanding how the refugee community interacts is crucial to planning such important efforts.

■ Award from s.a.g.e.

SAFE and GREEN, the 3-pronged SBS USA program to protect kids from riding in unusable safety seats and keep such items from the landfill by recycling them at TMC Horizon in Pomona, was recognized by sustainable and green environments from the South Bay area of Los Angeles County with a GREEN RECOGNITION AWARD for 2013.

At the s.a.g.e. annual EXPO, SBS USA partnered with Kids Double Time, a store in Redondo Beach, where owner Marcia Born has become a drop-off site for such seats, by showing a beautiful Britax Boulevard that had been in a crash as well as more obviously unsuitable products.

On Earth Day, Gayle Anderson of KTLA Morning News visited the store to extoll the program, recognizing the work of Marcia, Danny Luna of Miller Children's Hospital, and Tamara Garcia and Megan Arce, Car Seat Savvy, who have recruited store drop-off sites, as well as Heidi Heflin for SBS USA. Photos of stacks of seats ready for TMC Horizon and news of TMS USA associates turning in more at their headquarters and more recently, news of 40 discarded seats at Children's Hospital Los Angeles show us the need is throughout the area. Let us know if your facility, like the ten already listed at www.carseat.org, can accept seats for recycling.

Calendar

Kidz In Motion (KIM) Conference

August 27 - 29: Albuquerque, NM. Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa. Go to www.kidzinmotion.org for conference information and to register.

The updated Color Pictorial, with photos, names, and production years of all of the seats by type for the past 10 years, is ready to order from SBS USA. \$50 plus \$17 shipping for color print-out. \$30 for license to print a single copy.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

Office: 1124 W. Carson St.

LA BioMed,

Building B-1 West

Torrance, CA 90502

(310)222-6860 - English

(310)222-6862 - Spanish

(800)745-SAFE

(800)747-SANO

FAX: (310)222-6862

Web site: www.carseat.org

Mail: Box 553

Altadena, CA 91003

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

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CPSTI

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Good News from National Survey on Use of Booster Seats (NSUBS), 2011

Created by Congressional direction, the NSUBS data cover observations of kids under age 13 and interviews of their drivers in a probability-based manner, allowing for projections of national findings.

Although booster use increased slightly for kids ages 4 to 7, still fewer than 50% were using boosters or seats with harness systems; in fact, 25% were in belts only (down from 32%) with 10% unrestrained.

Major findings on younger kids included: 7% of 1-to-3 year olds are rear facing, a doubling since 2009 and only 2% are in belts only, half of the 2009 figure. For 4-to-7 year olds, 18% were in harness-equipped seats, up from 14%.

In the booster age range under age 12, booster use is up seven percentage points to 13% and belt only usage, down to 72% from 78%. Of Asian children 8-to-12 years old, 96% are buckled up compared with 80% in 2009.

Latino and African-American drivers with kids aboard show lower belt use than other groups.

Find the complete report at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811718.pdf>.

Back Seat = Better Seat

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Center for Injury Research and Prevention team has studied ways to change the rear seats of vehicles to improve protection for kids who have outgrown all safety seats. Since 70% of rear-seat passengers are teens and kids, addressing their needs in future NHTSA New Car Assessments can reduce injuries.

Among the "missing" technologies are load limiters and pretensioners on safety belts, which reduce head and chest risks. Most rear seats are deep, leading children to slouch, thus placing the lap belt on their abdomen. Kids' injuries are focused on the head and abdomen; to date (see NSUBS data, p. 2), relatively few children at risk between 8-12 are using boosters, despite recent emphasis on belt fit.

Reducing side movement in side impacts, reducing head contact with seat backs, and fitting the belts to the children's bodies would help. Recent work on shoulder-lap belts on school bus seats, enabling both large and small students to wear them, might contribute to new designs. For details, see <http://injury.research.chop.edu>.

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■ Child Safety Loses a Champion

Senator Nicholas Petris, author of the 1983 California child passenger safety law, died on March 20 at the age of 90. Advised by a team of advocates, including Cheryl Kim of SBS USA, Senator Petris included key provisions making CA law the most comprehensive state law at that time. The law initially required proper use, applied to parents and other drivers, and covered children until they were both 4 years and 40 pounds.

Subsequently, the Senator authored a series of bills that improved the law, including distribution of fine money to local health departments for programs that provide education and low-cost safety seats and a requirement that violators attend an education program if their fines are reduced or waived due to economic disadvantage.

In 1994, the senator accepted a suggestion from SBS USA that children under 16 be covered under the child restraint law (adding V.C. 27360.5 to the existing 27360) rather than under the adult safety belt law (V.C. 27315). This was an important change, since enforcement of 27315 (compared to 27360/27360.5) results in a much lower fine, no point on the driving record, and no education requirements or fine allocation.

Senator Petris exemplified long-term commitment to issues he viewed as meaningful. SBS USA dedicated Safety Seat Checkup Day to his memory.

■ Doo Dah Parade has Booster Cheer!

Coordinated by SBS USA Board Member Anne Hamilton and Program Consultant Maria Inez Perez with the wholehearted support of Patricia Lacey, Healthy Start Coordinator, Jackson Elementary, Pasadena USD, parents and students from the school donned blue eye make-up and shook their blue cheerleading sticks, presenting both a short jingle and intermittently, the full Booster Cheer for the Pasadena Doo Dah Parade audience—and judges on April 27.

Following a band and trailed by a series of unusual parade-mates, Anne's three oldest girls and the Jackson kids were patient with delays and actively passed out "The Perfect Gift" brochure to families along the route. Jackson parents carried boosters and signs, touting both booster use and their school mascot, the Dolphin. Maggie Hamilton asked, as it ended, how many days to the next parade!

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.
P.O. Box 553
Altadena, California 91003

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■ We Saw You at the Petersen!

Safety Seat Checkup Day, 4/6, at Petersen Automotive Museum, Los Angeles, was a fine opportunity to meet the SafetyBelt- or -Seat Saved and offer help to families seeking a safer ride. Thirty families with 47 safety seats sought aid from 12 teams of checkers, with only two seats and a seat base not needing correction.

This year, we had three different reports of crash experience, including from Andrew Harris, Cadet with Captain Jay Weinsoff Cadet Squadron 3, Civil Air Patrol, Van Nuys, who was saved in a 26-car collision in MN when he was a child, a factor in his dedication to volunteering at our event.

Elisa Gomez brought her son Jazon Lopez; she first shared word of their being saved in a crash in 12/12. After telling her story, she learned that her niece, along for the experience, needed a booster, which, thanks to CA Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) funding, we were able to provide.

Connie Lichtenstein and baby Rachel reached out to SBS USA because of an odd crash in which a large truck stuck in freeway traffic impinged on their car as they tried to go around it. Of course, the diverse circumstances of their crashes show how critical it is to ride properly on every trip.

Among counties that declared Safety Seat Checkup Week were Glenn, Mono, Los Angeles, and Stanislaus along with numerous cities from Azusa to Los Angeles and Torrance. The checkup was the successful conclusion to the Certification training for Technicians SBS USA conducted.

Thanks to Mike Sachs, MD for feeding the volunteers; for CA OTS and Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. for their support; and to all of the law enforcement agencies which participated in Special Enforcement Week in March.

■ Disturbing Finding at Head Start Checkup

Invited by CDI Head Start to offer a checkup at a facility in Altadena, with support from Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, SBS USA teams discovered that the initial three families had something in common---each motivated parent had removed parts from their safety seats, all of which were bought new. Two had removed the top tether strap and LATCH attachments, in one case by cutting them off, and a 3rd had removed a part of the shell, thinking it wasn't needed until the child was older. All had had instructions but hadn't gleaned enough to prevent this.

Matching this to the data from several studies over time showing that less than 50% use top tethers, even when anchors are available, underscores the critical need to focus on this aspect of CPS education.

■ Notes from Lifesavers 2013: Technology Unusual in the U.S. on Its Way:

Perhaps as soon as this month, safety seats using a stabilizing leg as an optional method for preventing rotation of rear-facing seats will appear on 2 new rear-facing-only safety seats.

Although use of the leg is optional as it cannot be used to meet FMVSS 213, it offers excellent stability, reducing the potential stress on the infant's spine. The now-discontinued Britax 2005 Baby Safe offered this feature; however, the market may be more receptive now.