

Report from the Alaska Trauma Registry on Motor Vehicle Injuries to Children

A query of the Alaska Trauma Registry data for the most recent years available, 2001-2005, identifies 61 children, from birth through eight years of age, seriously injured in a motor vehicle crash on the highway. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that children be restrained in a child safety seat or belt positioning booster seat up through age eight.

All of these injuries required admission to the hospital, three died, and one two-year-old's injuries resulted in quadriplegia. **Only five of the 61 injured children were recorded to have been restrained properly in the recommended child safety seat at the time of injury** – and none of the four mentioned above was properly restrained. There was one additional injury, not included in the 55, which involved a fetus who was subsequently delivered by C-section.

A further breakdown of age groups and safety equipment use is as follows:

< 1 year:	7 injured	3 restrained in child safety seats; 4 unrestrained
1 year old:	4 injured	1 restrained in a child safety seat; 1 unrestrained ; 2 unrecorded
2 years old:	5 injured	2 in child safety seat (1 child seat failed-was ejected); 2 with safety belt/harness; 1 unrestrained
3 years old:	6 injured	1 lap belt only; 5 unrestrained
4-8 years old:	39 injured	15 with safety belt/harness; 9 lap belt only; 11 unrestrained; 4 unrecorded

Total: 61

Clearly the incidence of not using restraints is very high among the injured population in this study. However, also remarkable, is the incidence of improper restraint, especially among children ages 4 through 8. Without belt positioning booster seats, this group is not adequately protected during a motor vehicle crash.

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