



# Child Passenger Safety

## BACKGROUND

The Passenger Safety Project at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works to reduce deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes by increasing the use of child restraints and safety belts. The project's emphasis is on increasing the correct use of child safety seats across Texas.

[passengersafety.tamu.edu](http://passengersafety.tamu.edu)  
[buckleup.tamu.edu](http://buckleup.tamu.edu)



Although Passenger Safety reaches a wide variety of audiences across the state, the majority of the clientele are low-income and minority families. In addition to conducting checkup events, child safety seat fitting stations have been established at county Extension offices, fire/EMS and law enforcement departments to allow families easy access to certified technicians. When needed, a replacement seat is issued at no charge to parents and caregivers at child safety seat checkup events and fitting station appointments.

Project-trained technicians deliver educational programs on child passenger safety in their community as well as educate parents one-on-one about the correct installation and usage of their child safety seat. The program is ideal for Extension agents wanting to bring a much needed, visible, and easily measured economic benefit to their counties.

## RELEVANCE

- The use of belt-positioning booster seats lowers the risk of injury to children in crashes by 59 percent, compared to the use of adult safety belts
- Lack of access to affordable child safety seats contributes to a lower usage rate among low-income families
- Most parents think they are using child safety seats correctly, but studies show that an estimated 3 out of 4 seats are used incorrectly

2,077  
 inspections



1,445  
 seats distributed



55 children  
 arrived correctly  
 restrained



# At a glance . . .

## RELEVANCE

Traffic crashes are one of the leading causes of death for children under age 14.

**\$214** million total annual cost of motor vehicle occupant related death and injury for children 14 and under.

In **2019**, only slightly more than 50% of children killed in vehicle crashes in Texas were known to be restrained.



Crash data from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration shows that minority children are at a greater risk of being unrestrained.

On average, **3** children under age **14** are killed each day.

**11,606** lives were saved by child restraints from 1975 to 2017.

At **100%** child safety seat use for children under age 5, an estimated **371** lives could have been saved in 2017.



## RESULTS

The proper use of child safety seats reduces the risk of injury and death, leading to reduced medical costs, avoidance of lost future earnings, and improved quality of life



Economic benefits are an estimated ... **\$2,441** per child age 0 to 4, **\$2,921** per child age 4 to 7 for new seats distributed, **\$695** per child for seat misuse with an assumed 75% continued use.

## SUCCESS STORIES

"Two weeks after the car seat inspection, I was involved in an auto accident. The car seat "did not move" and my child was not injured. I want to let the officer know how thankful I am for helping me with the car seat and how appreciative I am that this free service is offered in our community." – Parent after having an inspection at a Passenger Safety sponsored fitting station, July 2018

"I am very grateful for the car seat I received and the education on how to use it. I was just in a serious crash and it saved my little boy's life!" – Parent, September 2018

"I wish I had done this (had my car seat inspected) sooner!" – Parent at Gillespie County Checkup Event, October 2015



**Passenger Safety**  
 in cooperation with  
**Save a Life**  
 Texas Department of Transportation

## SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM

In 2019 ... **126** Texas children under 14 were killed and

**21,090** were injured in motor vehicle crashes.

Only **27.7%** percent of Texas 5 to 9 year-olds were correctly restrained in 2018.



Child safety seats are **71%** effective in reducing fatal injury for infants and **54%** effective for toddlers.

Minority children are more likely to be fatally injured in car crashes than white children. Rural areas have a higher crash incidence and death rate than urban areas.

## RESPONSE

The Passenger Safety Project is funded through federal funds competitively awarded to conduct Safety Technician Training to certify technicians to assist parents with child safety seat education.

In 2019, **55** child passenger safety technicians were certified.

To date, **1,106** technicians trained,

including **201** Extension agents and **284** law enforcement officers.

References for this brief are available upon request.