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Strategies to Increase the Use of Safety Belts by Youngsters

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16. Abstract <p>By using a literature review, consultation with traffic safety and child development experts, and focus group discussions, this project investigated strategies to increase use of safety belts among youngsters. Sixteen groups were held with children in grades 3 through 10 and parents of children in grades K through 12 in suburban Chicago, Illinois, and Buffalo, New York, states that require belt use in front seats and rear seats by children under 6 and 10, respectively. The groups were divided between users and non-users of safety belts.</p> <p>Participants were asked about their transition from child safety seats to safety belts, their safety belt attitudes and behavior, and their attitudes about belt use laws. Participants reacted to written and illustrated descriptions of program strategies for increasing safety belt use. Strategies covered school-based programs, enforcement, special events, parent and peer pressure programs, reminder signs and messages, insurance premium increases for persons ticketed for non-belt use, and delays in licensing for holders of learner's permits who receive tickets for non-belt use.</p> <p>Five program strategies have potential for increasing the use of safety belts by youngsters: Testimonials, belt law enforcement, penalties for new drivers, informing adult drivers of need for children to use safety restraints and belts, and reminder signs and messages. Detailed descriptions of the strategies covered each program's objective, possible components, target audience, administrators, participants, sponsors, materials, special concerns, and other strategies and activities. The program recommendations were endorsed by the panel of child development and traffic safety experts who reviewed key materials during the course of the project. In addition to the five strategies, two complementary program activities were recommended: 1) pledge card programs in which members of the target audience make a commitment to use belts, and 2) the presentation of factual information to counter some of the improper practices, negative attitudes and myths about belts. The consensus was that a combination of program strategies is most effective. One of the key emerging ideas was that a different blend of strategies works with each age group.</p>			
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) wished to identify strategies for increasing the use of safety belts among youngsters after the age of using child safety seats and before the age of driving -- roughly 5-15 year olds. NHTSA sponsored a project involving three forms of research -- a review of the literature, focus group discussions, and input from experienced experts. Ten child development and traffic safety experts were consulted on key project components, including the study design and final recommendations. A brief discussion of the literature review is presented first, followed by highlights of the focus group findings, and a summary of recommendations for program strategies.

A. Highlights of Literature Review

The purpose of the review of published literature based solely on easily retrieved abstracts was to provide insights into the effective design and implementation of safety belt programs. The review covered safety belt use by children and two encouraged behaviors -- safe street-crossing and proper dental hygiene -- whereby children are encouraged to engage in a behavior that is not intrinsically enjoyable in order to protect themselves from some unperceived threat to their health.

1. Effectiveness of Programs

The literature establishes clearly that child belt use, like other safety and health practices, can be increased through both cognitive and motivational approaches. Generally speaking, the effectiveness of cognitive

approaches, as represented by information and education programs, varies with the intensity of the programs. Programs consisting merely of short discussions or audiovisual presentations may improve knowledge, but may have relatively little impact on attitudes or behavior. Those programs having an impact upon behavior typically involve a variety of instructional approaches extending over many class periods. The greatest changes in behavior result from programs that extend outside the classroom to provide practice and to develop experience in the behaviors to be learned. Enforcement-related programs also influence behavioral change.

The lack of strong relationships between measured attitudes and observed behavior suggests that measures of attitude change may not be valid indices of the effectiveness of programs in achieving increases in actual safety belt use. Also, significant interactions between location (urban vs. rural) and program effects indicate that different types of programs affect different segments of the community.

2. Duration of Program Effects

In virtually all of the programs reviewed, the effects of the programs involved lasted only as long as the programs themselves. Among the information and education programs, the effects began to diminish shortly after the programs terminated. No programs showed significant long-term effects, e.g., effects lasting more than a few months after the program ended. (Note: These programs were conducted before belt use laws were enacted in many states.) While the decline in performance appears to affect all types of programs, those programs that provide practice in behavior application may have a lingering effect.

The use of extrinsic incentives in the form of awards for safety belt use appears to be effective in increasing the use of belts by children in the short-term; long-term effectiveness has not been studied. Also, incentive programs are not always effective even in the short-term if conducted in states with safety belt use laws and/or high use rates. Programs involving

incentives show little benefit once the incentives are withdrawn. Sustained incentive programs are not practical; also, regular belt users who do not need extrinsic rewards may resent such programs.

3. Change Agents

Generating a long-term positive influence on child belt use is likely to require involvement of more than just the formal school system. The success of various adult-mediated efforts to modify the behavior of children points to the advantages of exploiting a wide range of change agents in attempting to improve the level of child safety belt use.

The advantages of adult-mediated efforts include the ability to: (a) extend the duration of cognitive and motivational programs over time, (b) influence behavior at the point it is required, that is, when the child enters a vehicle, and (c) offer a wide range of incentives and to continue them almost indefinitely (something that cannot be achieved through most publicly supported incentive programs).

In terms of direct adult influence, parents and other family members, including older siblings, are the most frequent source. Other adults can also influence belt use, including carpool drivers and teachers driving students on field trips. Adults indirectly influence use through their planning and management of school materials and mass media.

4. Overcoming Negative Influences

Overcoming negative influences would contribute to increased belt use by youngsters. Such influences can include 1) the overestimating of small children's abilities and the use of instructional techniques that children are incapable of understanding or carrying out, 2) scolding, nagging, punishing, and other "negative" approaches that not only fail to achieve their objective, but actually reduce the incidence of desired behavior, 3) unbelted role

models, and 4) incidence of unbelted travel that expose the child to danger but provide reinforcement of the perception that belts are not needed.

B. Highlights of Focus Group Discussions

The discussion of the focus groups covers methodology, highlights related to program strategies, comparison of users and non-users, and transitioning.

1. Methodology

The qualitative research consisted of twelve focus groups with youngsters in the third through tenth grades and four groups with parents of children between 5-15 years of age. Discussions were conducted in Homewood, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, and Hamburg, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, in May and June of 1988. Half of the groups were conducted with self-reported users of safety belts and the balance with self-reported non-users. In addition to belt use behavior and grade in school, respondents were recruited on the basis of general socioeconomic and family status characteristics, including number of children in the household.

Respondents were asked about their attitudes and behavior regarding safety belts. They were then asked about the potential effectiveness of various programs for increasing safety belt use. Program options ranged from school-based activities to parent and peer pressure efforts to stricter enforcement to more highway reminder signs. In addition to discussing the programs in terms of their own age groups, respondents were asked about each option's effectiveness with older or younger children.

To hold the interest and attention of the third, fourth and fifth graders, illustrations of seven program options were used. The children were given marker pens to color each full-page illustration during the discussion of its implications. All other respondents used written program descriptions.

2. Highlights Related to Program Descriptions

The participants in the focus groups discussed more than a dozen hypothetical program options, including school-based programs and policies such as inter-class competitions, required belt use by teams, and survivors' testimonial presentations. Examples of enforcement-related programs included strict ticketing of the belt use laws, contests for persons observed using belts, and the safety belt salute (where officers tug at their own safety belts when they see unbuckled children in nearby cars who are watching them). Other program options included parent and peer pressure programs such as pledge cards, reminder signs and messages, insurance premium increases for persons ticketed for non-belt use, and delays in obtaining driver's licenses.

A graphic representation of the findings is presented as Exhibit 1. This chart shows the expected relative effectiveness of the program strategies based on participants' reactions and the analysts' interpretation of those reactions. Many of the programs were considered effective for younger children whereas few strategies appealed to the ninth and tenth graders.

- The program most acceptable to all types of participants was the testimonial. However, live testimony by local peers was favored over videotapes that might be perceived by a skeptical young audience to be faked.
- Younger children, especially third, fourth and fifth graders, were more favorable to school-based programs. Students above the fifth grade said that children do not listen in school and the programs would not work.
- Younger children were more positive about contests, primarily because they could be more easily satisfied than older children with a pizza party. Older children wanted more substantial incentives such as compact disc players. Older participants also found the contest-related programs to be laughable.
- Insurance discount programs had appeal for the older children and parents.
- Ninth and tenth graders seemed particularly responsive to a program whereby a permit holder's failure to buckle up could result in a delay in obtaining a driver's license.

EXHIBIT 1

"Assessments of Likely Effectiveness of Program Strategies"

<u>Program Strategy^b</u>	<u>Focus Group Findings</u>				<u>Experts^a</u>
	<u>Grades</u>				
	<u>3-4-5^c</u>	<u>6-7-8</u>	<u>9-10</u>	<u>Parents</u>	
School-based Programs					
Testimonials	ND	1	1	1	1-2
Discussion of safety belts in class	1	2	2	1	1-2
Pledge cards	ND	2	2	2	2
Contests	ND	2	2	2	2
Required belt use by team members	ND	3	3	2	2
Convincer demonstrations	ND	3	3	2	2
Enforcement Programs					
Tickets for adults	1 ^d	1 ^d	1	1	1
Tickets for children	1 ^d	1 ^d	1	1	1
Safety belt salute	1	3	3	3	2-3
Contests sponsored by police	ND	3	3	3	2
Parent/Peer Pressure Programs					
Pledge cards	2	2	3	3	2
Scripts	ND	2	ND	ND	2
Reminder Signs and Messages					
Reminder signs	1	2	2	1	2
Announcements at events	ND	ND	3	ND	2
Insurance and Other Penalties					
Premium increases	ND	1	1	3	1
Pre-driver's license penalties for driver's nonuse; also for passengers' nonuse	ND	ND	1	ND	1

Assessment Scale^e
 1 = Ranked relatively effective
 2 = Ranked somewhat effective
 3 = Ranked not effective

ND = Not discussed
 See next page for notes a-e.

NOTES FOR EXHIBIT 1

- a. *Not all experts provided evaluations.*
- b. *Program strategies are presented in Section I. Background, Objectives, and Methodology. As noted in the exhibit's heading, they are listed here in the same order rather than rank order. Because of the attention span of the younger children, only 90-minute discussions were scheduled with third, fourth and fifth graders; not all program strategies were expected to be discussed in these groups. In some other groups as noted, time constraints prevented full discussion of all program strategies.*
- c. *The methodology used with third, fourth and fifth graders involved simple illustrations of general strategies, not more detailed written descriptions used in the other groups. Thus, certain specific activities such as Convincer demonstrations were not covered.*
- d. *Children in these grades have strong concerns about equity. They believe that enforcement should cover all ages.*
- e. *The assessment scale relates to the program strategies as presented in the groups and does not account for differences in participants' perceptions if program elements are changed or improved. For example, the pledge card program was viewed as ineffective by older students. Yet, if these students were involved in a teaching or monitoring role, they might well be more positive.*

- Respondents were generally opposed to having belt use required for members of sports teams and participants in other school activities.
- Younger children felt that tickets should be given for any unbelted person in the car, not just for children or just for adults. Students at the sixth grade level and above were more likely to buckle up if they had to pay the ticket.
- The safety belt salute was viewed as effective for younger children.
- Pledge card programs got mixed reviews, with more positive reactions found in the third, fourth and fifth grade groups. Participants were concerned about the possibility of parents and children not keeping their promise and the problem of confirming their actual belt use.
- Signs were viewed as positive reminders that could be placed in many locations. Younger children especially favored signs.
- The convincer demonstration got mixed reports, with some participants believing it might help and others considering it simply a fun ride.

3. Comparisons of Belt Users and Non-users

Half of the groups were conducted with users of safety belts and half with non-users. The following similarities and differences were noted between belt users and non-users:

- Users and non-users were similar in their attitudes about belts and programs. Non-users tended to be more skeptical about the potential effectiveness of programs.
- Young non-users were more likely to have parents who did not buckle and who did not make them buckle.
- Users were more likely to consider the law favorably although both groups believed that the law is not enforced.
- Users were less likely to attach negative terms such as "nerd" to safety belt users.

4. Transitioning

Also of interest were the findings related to how children are transitioned from child safety seats to safety belts. Regardless of their own self-reported use of safety belts, virtually all of the younger participants believed that they had used child safety seats. Some parents recalled not using seats with their older children who were born before the states' child safety seat laws were enacted.

Participants remembered very little about when they stopped using the seats and the nature of their transition to safety belts. Some parents described problems in keeping children in the seats, especially as they learned how to unbuckle themselves. Active children were described as particularly difficult to keep in seats.

The majority of children seemed to go right from seats to belts or nothing. Little use of booster seats or "tot riders" was reported. The one complaint about belt use was that short children could not see outside the vehicle as well as they could when in a safety seat.

C. Recommendations

Five program strategies appeared to have noteworthy potential for increasing the use of safety belts by youngsters, based on an analysis of the focus group findings and panel of experts:

1. Testimonials
2. Belt law enforcement
3. Penalties for new drivers
4. Informing adult drivers of need for children to use safety restraints and belts
5. Reminder signs and messages

The full report contains detailed descriptions of the program strategies' features: objective, possible components, target audience, administrators, participants, sponsors, materials, special concerns, and other issues and activities. In addition to these five strategies, two complementary program activities were recommended: 1) pledge card programs in which members of the target audience make a commitment to use belts, and 2) the presentation of factual information to counter some of the improper practices, negative attitudes and myths about belts.

The consensus was that a combination of program strategies is likely to be most effective, perhaps even necessary for achieving long-term, widespread belt use among current and future children. Further, the selection of strategies should be based on an understanding of the differences between age groups and their receptiveness to specific program elements.

I. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This section presents the background, study objectives, expert panel and focus group methodology. Also provided are caveats about generalizing from qualitative research findings.

A. Background and Objectives

Recent national survey data have indicated that automobile safety belt use is lowest among teenagers (22 percent use belts) and subteens (30 percent), compared to more than 40 percent for adults. These statistics are cause for concern for two reasons: a) Habits acquired in youth tend to stay with the individual throughout his or her lifetime. Thus, the task of persuading adults becomes more difficult. b) These age groups, especially subteens, are at additional risk, because they often ride in the rear seat or the middle of the front seat and are therefore not protected by automatic occupant protection systems.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) wished to gain an in-depth understanding of why youngsters do not use safety belts. This understanding would support the agency's efforts to develop strategies for increasing safety belt use. Also, the agency wished to use the information obtained during the research to adapt existing safety belt programs and develop new programs targeted to youngsters.

For this study, the age range was defined broadly as post-toddler seat (3 or 4 years) to pre-driver (15 years). Thus, the range includes children who use safety belts rather than child safety or toddler seats.

B. Methodology

The study consisted of four components: literature review, expert panel, focus group discussions with youngsters and parents, and assessment of program strategies. Each component is described below.

1. Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to provide insights into the effective design and implementation of safety belt programs. The scope of the review was broadened beyond traffic safety to identify additional teaching strategies that might also be successfully applied from other areas of preschool and primary education -- street-crossing behavior and dental hygiene. A summary of the review is presented in Section II.

2. Panel of Experts

Nine experts were recruited to guide the development of the focus group materials and program strategies and to review the draft final report and program recommendations. This panel consisted of individuals in government, universities, consumer research, and service organizations, who were identified as having expertise in child development, education and law enforcement related to occupant protection programs. Members were contacted by mail and by telephone at specific stages in the project. Their names and descriptions are presented in Appendix A. Also listed is the consulting child psychologist who served as an advisor to the project.

3. Focus Group Research

Qualitative research in the form of focus groups was conducted. Twelve groups were held with students in grades three through ten, and four groups were conducted with parents of children in the post-toddler seat (3 or 4 years) to pre-driver (15 years) age range. The groups were evenly divided

between self-reported users and non-users of safety belts. An experienced moderator guided the discussions.

The composition of the focus group participants was based on several factors:

- The ages of children who could reasonably be expected to contribute in a group discussion. (Children under seven, although part of the project's targeted age group, were not considered at the appropriate age developmentally for focus group participation. Information on their views was obtained through parents and older children.)
- Homogeneous subgroups of similar maturation level.
- A range of parental attitudes and behavior. A majority of parents with several children was recruited to provide more parental experience and intra-family perspectives of differences in safety belt use.
- The need to have groups conducted in two states with belt use laws and different enforcement provisions: primary enforcement and secondary enforcement (where a ticket can be issued for not using belts only if the vehicle driver is stopped for another violation).
- A broad socioeconomic representation within each group of respondents.
- Respondent exposure to a range of interstate, expressway and local roads.
- Conducting the non-user focus groups after the user groups so that hypotheses about the motivations of children who use belts could be tested.
- Minimizing project costs for travel, participant recruitment, and meeting logistics.

Two sites were selected: Homewood, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago) and Hamburg, New York (a suburb of Buffalo). Both states have safety belt use laws.

(Note to reader: Only states with mandatory use laws were considered because the purpose of this study was to determine what programs would

stimulate increased use of safety belts by youngsters. A majority of states have belt use laws, and these states account for the majority of the targeted population. Belt laws create a positive climate of legitimacy for belt promotion and enforcement programs.)

The discussions were held in focus group facilities in major shopping malls in those communities. The facilities featured one-way mirrors so that the discussions could be observed. Audio tapes were made of all discussions. (The focus group schedule is presented as Appendix B.)

To make certain that the appropriate respondents were recruited to participate in the groups, detailed screening instructions were provided to the focus group facilities. These instructions (Appendix C) specified the numbers of respondents in each group according to these characteristics: the age, grade and sex of the child being recruited; number and ages of the child's siblings; child's safety belt use; household income; frequency of being driven by a particular adult; age, occupation and education of parent; and race/ethnicity. The facilities were also provided with screeners for use in recruiting parents and children (Appendix D).

The screeners were used first with parents to identify eligible children and to measure interest and availability for the group discussion. Parents were asked if one of their children would be willing to participate in the group. Parents were asked about their own safety belt use (Question 12) and their child's belt use (Question 13) if the child selected was in grades 3 through 5. Children in grades 6 through 10 were asked directly about their belt use (Question 12). If these children qualified, they were also asked about their interest and availability for participation.

Once the focus group design, instructions and screeners were prepared, detailed discussion guides were developed to make certain that the moderator guided the discussion through all key points. Four versions of the guide were developed -- for parents who were belt users and non-users and for children who were users and non-users. (These guides are presented as Appendix E.)

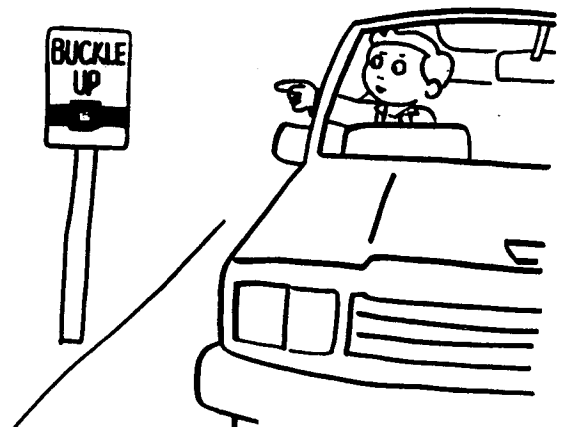
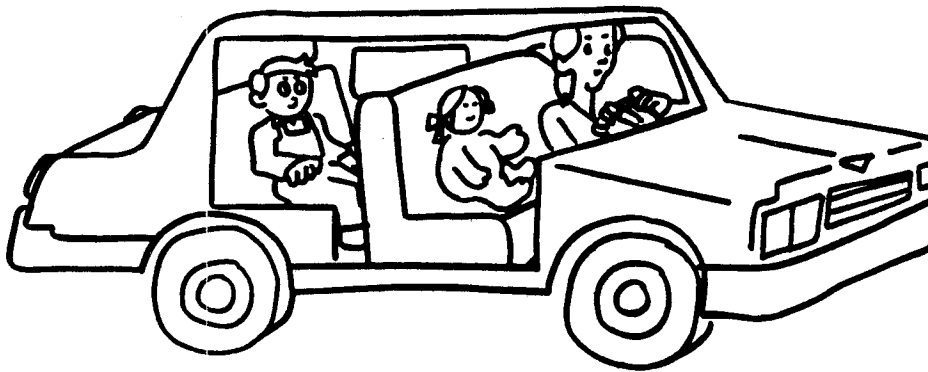
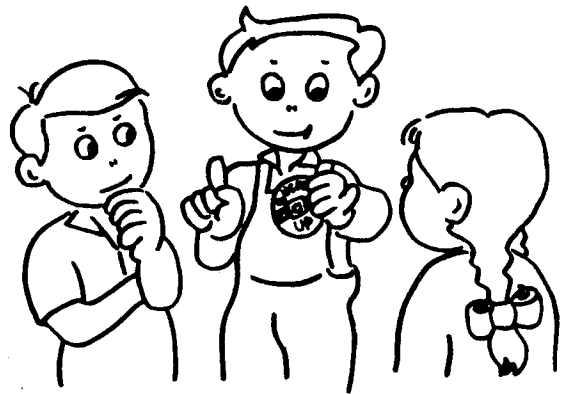
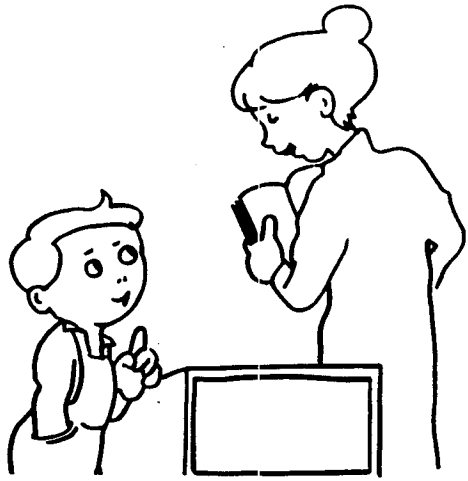
At the same time, work was initiated on the development of descriptions of school, enforcement and community programs that might stimulate increased safety belt use among youngsters. Seventeen statements were prepared, categorized and prioritized. The prioritization was required in the event that there was not sufficient time to discuss all statements.

Several illustrations of these statements were prepared for use with third, fourth and fifth grade participants to retain their interest and attention. Participants were provided with marker pens so that they could color each illustration while discussing its meaning. Although fewer illustrations were used than statements, the basic strategies were covered in these groups. Reduced versions of the illustrations are included in this section. Questions to be raised by the moderator when introducing each illustration appear in Appendix F.

The wording of all statements is included below. The statements actually used in the groups featured a large, easy typeface. Statements involving enforcement were customized to reflect each state's belt use law. Statement pages were handed out one at a time.

School-based Programs

- Information about the benefits of safety belt use and compliance with the Illinois (New York) law is presented in the classroom, including math and art classes.
- School-sponsored field trips require the use of available safety belts on school buses and in cars. Belt use is required of school teams (e.g., sports, debating), band members, and other groups. Enforced school policy requires students, faculty, and staff to use safety belts when riding on school property, including driveways and parking lots. Penalties include publicity, detention halls, etc.
- A device called a "convincer" is brought to school for volunteer students, faculty, and staff to ride, showing how it feels to stop suddenly in a crash.
- Pledge cards are given to students, faculty, and staff who do not use belts, to get their promises to start buckling up on all trips for at least one month.



- Schools sponsor competitions (among groups such as students and teachers, different schools or nearby school districts) to get higher belt use, ride "convincers," and sign pledge cards. Prizes are given to winners, including coupons for movies, pizza and other items.
- Children tend to believe other children more than adults. Hence, students attend assemblies where live or videotaped testimonials are made by children who have been saved from death or injury by using a safety belt, who have suffered injury by not using a belt, or who have been orphaned because parents were unbelted in a crash. Textbooks and other publications have testimonial examples of children who were saved by belt use or harmed by belt non-use.

Enforcement-related Programs

- Police strictly enforce Illinois (New York) safety belt law, giving \$25 tickets to unbelted adults in the front seat. Tickets are not given for unbelted children (who are not licensed drivers). Tickets get recorded on each adult driver's violation record, and stiffer fines are imposed if an adult receives several tickets. Drivers will get one or more points on their driving record for each violation. (Note: According to the Illinois law; nonuse of safety belts is a secondary offense.)
- The Police Department sponsors a contest in which prizes are given to a random sample of owners of cars whose adults and children are observed using their belts. Police record license plate numbers for a drawing. Police then use computers to determine the winning car owners. Prizes include free meals donated by local restaurants.
- Police strictly enforce the Illinois safety belt law, giving traffic tickets to drivers if their young passengers are seen not using safety belts -- even if the driver is not the child's parent. A driver will get a ticket for each unbuckled child under 6, whether riding in the front or rear seat. Drivers will also get a ticket for each child age 6-15 who is not buckled up in the front seat. The fine is \$25, plus court costs. Drivers will get one or more points on their driving record for each violation.

- Police strictly enforce the New York safety belt law, giving traffic tickets to drivers if their young passengers are seen not using safety belts -- even if the driver is not the child's parent. A driver will get a ticket for each unbuckled child under 10, whether riding in the front or rear seat. Drivers will also get a ticket for each child up to age 16 who is not buckled up in the front seat. The fine is up to \$50. Drivers will get one or more points on their driving record for each violation.
- Police officers in cars tug at their own safety belts when they see unbuckled kids in nearby cars who are watching them.

Parent and Peer Pressure Programs

- Some children believe they are physically indestructible -- only adults might be killed or injured in a crash. School programs encourage children to use safety belts and serve as role models for their parents and other older household members. Children are encouraged to remind parents to use their belts -- to keep children from becoming orphans! Devices such as pledge cards are issued in schools for students to get their parents to sign, promising that parents will use belts at all times.
- Kids who use belts put pressure on their peers and siblings to get other kids who don't use belts to start using them all the time. Kids are given scripts they could use when asking other kids (and family or friends) to use belts. Children not only encourage other children and adults to buckle up, they strengthen their own commitment to using belts, to avoid being teased if they themselves don't buckle up.

Reminder Signs/Messages

- Many people claim that they don't use belts because they "forget" to buckle up or they "just don't think about buckling up." Lots of reminder signs are put up in parking lots, at toll booths, at driveway exits, and along roads.
- Announcers at sports events and other activities also remind adults and kids to buckle up when they leave.

Insurance and Other Penalties

- In any state with a safety belt use law: When insured drivers are ticketed because their young passengers were unbelted, insurance companies will be notified by the police or through insurance policy application forms. Premiums for car insurance will be increased because adult drivers are risking children's lives.

- Records will be kept of all youngsters who receive tickets for not using safety belts. They will be penalized by having to wait to obtain a driver's permit or to obtain their license.

4. Assessment of Program Strategies

The strategy assessment portion of the study consisted of several elements. The findings from the literature review were examined. Previous studies sponsored by NHTSA, especially the final report on "Strategies to Increase the Use of Child Safety Seats among Toddlers" (January 1987), played a key role in shaping this study. The focus group findings were examined to determine if there were additional areas where information was needed. Also, determination was made of the opportunities for revising existing program materials.

Highlights of the focus group findings were provided to the project's expert panel, along with the questions presented below. Answers were obtained from panel members' written responses and during telephone interviews. This expert review of the findings was to validate the findings and to develop recommendations regarding effective program strategies.

- Please tell us which findings are in accord with experts' experience and seem to be particularly important to emphasize in the final report as well as in program development.
- Please tell us which findings are not in accord with current knowledge and programming.
- Please tell us which programs should be pursued further (such as possibly threatening the youngster who is eagerly awaiting the time when he or she will be eligible for a driver's permit).
- What themes/strategies should be pursued? Or avoided? (For example, peer pressure/family pressure? Law enforcement? Fear of death/injury/disfigurement?)
- Please suggest any programs and send sample materials so that the programs can be included in the final review.
- How can we address the skepticism voiced by both parents and children about people not keeping promises (e.g., students and parents believe that signed pledges to buckle up will not be followed)?

- How can programs be effectively implemented (such as how to monitor safety belt use by teachers or fellow students who promise to buckle up)?
- How can videotapes be made more credible and persuasive to this young and skeptical video generation? (Although "live" testimonials from peers may be the most believable, they are not practical from a program management/resource point of view.)
- How can the issue of the rights of disabled persons be tactfully addressed in testimonial programs (that seem to be perceived by ninth and tenth graders as potentially very effective)? (Being disabled must be presented sensitively; disabled persons should be presented as having active, positive lives.)
- How can programs be designed that do not rely on a steady supply of incentive prizes?
- How can programs be designed to have long-lasting effects on children?
- How can adult compliance be enforced in order to encourage parents to make their children buckle up?

The comments of the panel were considered in developing recommendations for effective strategies.

5. Caveats to the Reader

Qualitative research by its very definition does not incorporate the sampling procedures and sample size(s) characteristic of large-scale statistically representative survey or quantitative research. Although the study described herein did involve a large number of groups and more than 100 respondents, certain caveats are appropriate.

Focus groups are a commonly used research methodology when the objective is to gain an understanding about certain types of behavior and explore the motivations underlying that behavior. There is no measure made of how many participants think or behave a particular way.

This study cannot be considered reliable or valid in the statistical sense for a number of reasons. Groups involve a small number of people who

choose to participate and may not necessarily represent all children or parents. Some participants' responses may influence others so responses may not be independent. Questions are not asked the same way each time since the moderator builds on prior comments to sharpen each question.

The findings from this research should be used to generalize in terms of direction rather than magnitude, with larger scale surveys and follow-up behavioral experiments in multiple sites.

The recommendations for program strategies are based on the interpretation of what participants said about programs described in one-paragraph statements and their predictions of behavior upon being exposed to the programs. To some extent, participants' evaluations may have been distorted because of the effects of group dynamics and peer pressure. For example, ninth and tenth graders were concerned about appearing "cool." Therefore, some participants may have indicated that they did not favor a program, simply because they believed that others in the focus group did not.

The length of time devoted to any one program strategy was limited. Participants might possibly have reacted differently to program strategies if they had seen actual materials or discussed details. For example, the participants questioned how a police contest could be implemented, whether the odds of winning were reasonable and what steps would be taken to observe compliance. Yet, there was not sufficient time to discuss these and other operational details of such a program. If the students had reason to believe that the odds of winning were good and the prizes desirable, they may have been more positive about the concept of a contest sponsored by the police department.

Finally, the use of the focus group methodology precluded the direct input of children between post toddler (3 to 4 years old) and third grade. Focus groups were not considered appropriate for these ages. Information about the potential effectiveness of program strategies for these ages was obtained indirectly from the focus group participants.

II. Literature Review

To identify programs, procedures and supporting materials to motivate youngsters to use safety belts prior to focus group discussions, The Prism Corporation sponsored a separate review of literature and annotated bibliographies by the National Public Services Research Institute. Highlights of that review and the conclusions drawn from the literature are presented below. (The bibliography is included as Appendix G.)

A. Objective and Scope of Review

The purpose of the literature review was to provide insights into the effective design and implementation of safety belt programs. The review was not intended to provide an exhaustive analysis of all literature bearing on safety belt use by children. Rather, the review was limited to published literature accessible through abstract services, specifically TRIS (Transportation Research Board), MEDLINE (National Institutes of Health), and PASAR (American Psychological Association). Original literature was obtained only through NHTSA and NIH libraries and from members of the project's panel of experts. The review might have excluded recent reports of attempts to modify children's belt behavior following widespread adoption of use laws, because they were not yet identified in abstracts at the time of the review.

B. Other Child and Health-Related Behaviors

The task of inducing children to wear safety belts is similar to other tasks in which children are encouraged to engage in a behavior that is not intrinsically enjoyable in order to protect themselves from some unperceived

threat to their health. To identify additional strategies that might be successfully applied from other areas of preschool and primary education, the scope of the survey was broadened beyond traffic safety to include the following two areas:

- Street crossing
- Dental hygiene

Two other areas of behavior that have been highly researched -- health in relation to drinking and smoking -- were not studied because their primary focus is not upon current, desired behavior but upon behavior to avoid. Also, these behaviors do not involve all the age groups targeted in this study.

C. Highlights of Findings

Each of the three areas -- safety belts, street crossing, and dental hygiene -- will be discussed in turn. Within each topic, research will be divided into two categories:

Direct Efforts -- Those efforts in which the audience consists of children.

Adult Mediated -- Those efforts in which the audience consists of adults such as parents or teachers.

1. Child Safety Belt Use

a. Direct Efforts to Influence Child Belt Use

Evaluations of efforts to foster safety belt use among children have generally shown modest gains in observed and parent-reported belt use. Most of the programs have involved classroom instruction supported by audiovisual presentations. Not all of the evaluations have proved belts to be effective nor have long-term effects been evaluated. By far the greatest number of studies concerned with child safety belt use involved attempts to reach

children directly, primarily through schools. Very little effort has been channeled through parents.

(i) Educational Belt Programs

One study of the effectiveness of a local public information campaign showed a significant increase in the use of safety belts by children and rear seat passengers (Australia Road Research Board, 1982). Because there was no control group, attributing the increase entirely to the publicity campaign was not possible.

One of the earliest educational programs was carried out in Loudoun County, Virginia (Senk and Schwartz, 1972). Two booklets and a game were distributed to all public school teachers in the county. The distribution of materials was followed by an increase in both child-reported and teacher-reported safety belt use. In addition, observations of cars entering and leaving shopping centers within the county showed an increase in belt use among elementary school children, but no increase among older children or adults.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications developed a prototype educational program which was tested with 4,000 second and third graders attending school in the metropolitan Ontario area (Wilson, Lonero, and Ish, 1973). The two-hour program included viewing a short film depicting race car drivers, a police officer, a firefighter, a mechanic, and several children, all of whom used and encouraged the use of safety belts. In a room surrounded by 14 large interlocking safety posters, the children were led in a discussion of the film, which was followed by various related activities, such as performing skits and drawing pictures with belt use themes. Some students rode in a "convincer," a device that allowed them to experience simulated crash forces while using a safety belt.

The authors concluded that the program did substantially increase the use of safety belts within families whose children had been exposed to the

program. However, confidence in the outcome was somewhat weakened by finding a significant increase in belt use among parents of untrained children in the same age categories. Nevertheless, the results were considered sufficiently positive to warrant development and implementation of an educational program for Ontario elementary school students (Stephen, 1980).

Sowers-Hoag (1986) evaluated a safety belt intervention program involving practice, assertiveness training, and positive feedback among children through 4-8 years. While the sample was small (16 children), a significant improvement in observed belt use was reported.

In Oregon, Miller and Davis (1982) compared a nationally distributed program that included The Adventures of Beltman (FLI, Inc.) with a more traditional program using parent-reported child belt use as a criterion. Teachers in the treatment group received in-service training and followed 16 lesson plans from the Beltman program. On pre-tests, there were no significant differences in reported belt use between treatment and control groups.

Assessments of parent-reported belt use obtained shortly after the programs were completed showed that the Beltman groups exhibited significantly more reported belt use behavior than did students in the control group. However, four months later, belt use among the treatment group had dropped, and there were no longer significant differences between treatment and control groups.

In the State of Washington, Pollack and Swant (1983) assessed the effect of the Beltman program in combination with the multi-media teaching kit called Buckle Up Box, developed by Media Intensive Learning Corporation. The teaching kit used role-playing, self-talk, simulation, modeling, and a system of rewards. Some 510 elementary school children were randomly assigned to treatment groups, including various combinations of the two experimental programs, and a control group taught using more traditional methods.

In rural counties, children given Beltman and Buckle Up Box programs showed significantly higher percentages of parent-reported safety belt use after the program than did children of the control group. However, in urban counties, only the children using the Buckle Up Box showed significantly higher use rates. Since the number of parents reporting post-program use was considerably smaller than those reporting pre-program use, even the apparent improvements were suspect (parents with higher use rates may be more likely to report them).

No attempt was made to assess long-term effects. While concluding that the materials were effective, the authors recommended that future studies employ: (1) closer monitoring of participating teachers to assure adherence to event schedules, (2) gathering of use data by actual observation (particularly since parent-reported use in the study was found to be divergent from use figures reported in State accident records), (3) assessment of the appropriateness of materials for K-3 grade levels, and (4) more involvement from parents as reinforcers at home.

Woolf (1983) evaluated the effects of two nationally distributed films illustrating the effects of crashes on unbelted occupants. The films were viewed by both the parents and children, and both showed significant increases in safety belt use as reported by the parents. In addition, 39 percent of teachers reported that they observed an increase in student belt use following the program; 32 percent reported no change; and 29 percent reported having no opportunity to observe.

An instructional reading program developed by the American Seat Belt Council was tested in third through sixth grades in Fairfax County, Virginia, using knowledge and attitude measures (Cushman and Pain, 1983). Pre-post comparisons revealed statistically significant increases in tested knowledge within the treatment group but not within the control group. No significant gains were reported in attitudes toward belt use among either group, a finding the authors attributed to pre-test scores averaging less than one point from

the maximum obtainable score. A test with a higher "ceiling" might have detected improvements.

Not all assessments of child safety belt programs produced favorable outcomes. A study by Cushman, et al. (1985) assessed the effects of the following six programs: (1) A School Traffic Safety Education for lower elementary school grades (AAA), (2) School Traffic Safety Education for upper elementary grades (AAA), (3) Beltman for K-3 (FLI, Inc.) (4) Do You Buckle Up? for grades 4-6 (FLI, Inc.), (5) Safety Belt Activity Book for K-6 (NHTSA), and (6) Three Seconds to Safety for grades 3-6 (American Seat Belt Council).

The results of classroom tests on the effects of the safety belt program showed significant knowledge gains for all programs. However, the effects on attitudes and self-reported behavior were less clearcut. While overall results favored those in the treatment group, the magnitude and direction of pre-post differences among classes differed too widely to warrant any significance being attached to the overall outcome.

Li, et al. (1983) assessed the effectiveness of the Car Passenger Safety Curriculum, a program designed to provide continuing education in belt use for K-6 students. In a pilot test, the program was introduced in five treatment schools, while five control groups were used for comparison. The effectiveness of the program was assessed through observations of actual belt use by children arriving in cars. The increase in belt use found within schools using the curriculum was almost 2-1/2 times that found in the comparison school.

Under contract to NHTSA, Lockett and Wyron (1983) developed a K-12 curriculum covering all aspects of traffic safety including restraints, street crossing and cycling. It consisted of suggested teaching procedures and materials stratified by grade: K-2, 3-6, 7-12. Procedures included demonstrations of how to fasten belts as well as the consequences of not doing so. The program was based upon research involving various aspects of student-

related behavior as well as research involving youth education. No evaluation of this program has been conducted, nor have there been any plans to do so.

(ii) Incentive Programs

All of the programs discussed thus far have relied on information and education about safety belts to induce greater use. A number of safety belt programs have concentrated exclusively on manipulation of incentives for safety belt use.

Most of the safety belt incentive programs have been directed toward the public at large, college and high school students, and employees of various public and private organizations (including many studies conducted by E. Scott Geller, Ph.D., a member of the panel of experts for this project). However, a study by Campbell, et al. (1983, 1984) did report the effects of incentives upon young children. The program used such rewards as free meals from fast food restaurants, T-shirts, gift certificates from local merchants, and free tickets to various special attractions in a community-wide safety belt public awareness effort. Observations of belt use were made by trained observers in parked vehicles.

The extent of belt use rose 15 percent among school children within the community when rewards were given to those children who wore safety belts when leaving the school parking area in their parents' cars. A study by Benson (1983) used motivational themes appropriate to various targeted groups. Themes for adolescents implied that safety belt use was chic. No significant results were obtained.

Various incentive programs reported in the literature were carried out before widespread passage of state mandatory use laws. Whether the benefits of incentive programs would be found in use law states is questionable -- most of the parents and children likely to respond favorably to an incentive program would already be in compliance with the law.

(iii) Legislation

In States having compulsory safety belt legislation, the provisions of the law apply to all age groups (those in age groups requiring special child restraint systems are covered by separate laws, generally passed earlier). Observations by Goryl and Bowman (1987) showed that subteen passengers in cities under belt use laws had lower use rates than adult passengers, 29.2 percent vs 41.7 percent. In cities not under belt laws, use rates by subteens (26.2 percent) were slightly higher than adults (23.2 percent). However, pre-post comparisons within the same state (New York) showed a doubling of safety belt use by the 4-9 year age group in the year following passage of the mandatory use law, with somewhat less than half of the gain being lost in the second year (Rood and Kraichy 1986). The parents showed considerably greater gains and higher levels of post-law use than did the children. Over three quarters of children riding with restrained drivers were themselves restrained, while only a third of children riding with unrestrained drivers were themselves restrained. The same relationships were observed prior to and following passage of the law. The extent to which the correlation between parent and child restraint use results from the direct influence of parents versus the influence of other mediating variables was not apparent in the data.

b. Adult-Mediated Programs

Several programs have been developed to encourage and assist adults in fostering greater use of safety belts by children. Three such programs are:

Road Map to Child Passenger Safety (Ludwick, et al., 1985)--A step-by-step planning guide for child-oriented safety belt programs, including organization, fund-raising, media involvement, and networking with community institutions, businesses, health care, and enforcement departments.

Alcohol and Safety Belt Youth Guide (NHTSA, 1983)--A compendium of planning principles for involving professionals such as physicians, school officials, and police in developing youth-oriented safety belt programs, with special emphasis upon role modeling by adults.

Get It Together: Safety Belt and Child Safety Seat Educational Program (NHTSA, 1982)--A guide for developing broad community participation in safety belt programs.

Unfortunately, none of these programs has been evaluated for effectiveness. Unlike children, who represent a captive audience, parents are extremely difficult to involve in child safety or health programs. The few parents who respond to solicitations (e.g., PTA programs) tend to be among those who are already highly safety conscious.

The review did not address adult-directed efforts where modification of adult behavior was the ultimate objective rather than a step in modifying child behavior. For example, studies involving efforts to induce parents to install and secure their offspring in child restraints were seen as modifying parent rather than child behavior.

Several community-based programs were identified in the literature, with these programs ranging from the distribution of booklets and a game to an intervention program for children 4-8 years involving practice, assertiveness training, and positive reinforcement. In the latter case (Sowers-Hoag, 1986), a significant improvement in observed belt use was reported although most other studies were inconclusive.

In terms of several national programs with evaluation components, there was a wide range of programs featuring in-service training for teachers, role-playing, parent-child activities and other elements. Again, the findings varied from no significant gains after four months (Miller and Davis, 1982) to significantly higher use rates in urban areas for children using the Buckle Up Box (Pollack and Swant, 1983), for example.

2. Street-Crossing Behavior

Street-crossing behavior is similar to the use of safety belts in terms of criticality to children's traffic safety. (Bicycle riding is also important, but involves primarily the older age groups). Young children lack

the ability of older children and adults to perceive the risk in traffic situations and, therefore, require highly specialized educational approaches.

A number of efforts have been undertaken to influence street-crossing behavior of children directly and through mediation by adults. Most of the programs have involved use of audiovisual presentations, although some provide practice exercises at crossing sites. Some are classroom programs directed at children themselves, while others have attempted to enlist the aid of parents, teachers, and crossing guards in modeling and demonstrating safe crossing techniques. Most studies have found small but consistent improvements in street-crossing behavior, while two also found reductions in accidents.

The literature review focused exclusively upon modification of child behavior and did not include studies involving efforts to control behavior of children directly (e.g., through the use of crossing guards).

a. **Direct Efforts to Influence Child Street-Crossing Behavior**

Efforts designed to influence child street-crossing behavior directly include school programs and public information programs. The school-based studies examined in the review showed short-term results in terms of improvements in street-crossing behavior (Cawkell, 1982; Colburne, 1971; Cyster, 1981). Community-wide programs seemed more likely to bring about an increase in observed safe street crossing (Ahola, 1972; Blomberg, 1983; Reading, 1973).

b. **Adult-Mediated Crossing Behavior**

A number of efforts have been made to involve adults in improving street crossing by children. Adults mediating such efforts include both school personnel and parents.

Programs involving school personnel, including in-class instruction and special training for crossing guards, showed marked improvement in crossing

behavior (Yeaton and Bailey, 1978, 1983). When parents became involved in the programs, the results were different. One author pointed out the difficulty parents have in teaching safe traffic behavior to children (Sandels, 1966). Other authors observed that parents do not provide adequate encouragement and words of praise to instill safe street-crossing behavior (Embry and Malfetti, undated). When studies showed positive results, the same authors determined that parents fared better when shown techniques for teaching positive, safe-playing behavior.

c. Summary

The programs of information and education appeared to be modestly effective in leading to safer street-crossing behavior by young children. However, improvements in behavior lasted about as long as the programs that produced them. Greater and more enduring improvements in performance appeared to result from programs that went outside the classroom to (1) provide training and practice in a real-world or simulated traffic environment, (2) provide feedback on actual day-to-day street-crossing behavior, and (3) make use of crossing guards, parents, or other adults to reinforce the results of instruction.

3. Dental Hygiene Behavior

Dental hygiene is similar to use of safety belts in that it involves rather simple behavior, carried out on a day-to-day basis, requiring relatively little effort, and not regularly performed by the vast majority of children. All of the attempts to modify the dental hygiene of young children that were reviewed involved direct contact with children themselves. While parents generally played a role, their involvement was achieved through the children, rather than vice versa. Many of the efforts involved seventh graders. In most cases, the behavior involved was use of a mouth rinse.

a. Dental Hygiene Information/Education Programs

In one study, students viewing a slide presentation on dental hygiene practices had more knowledge after the program but were no different in their attitudes than students who did not watch the presentation (Kelly et al., 1976). In another study, an information-discussion approach was unaccountably less successful than an information-only program (Kegeles, Lund and Weisenberg, 1978). In a third study, where there were no significant long-term relationships between dental hygiene attitudes and practices, the authors attributed the results to the program's failure to create perceptions of vulnerability (Kegeles and Lund, 1984).

b. Dental Hygiene Incentive Programs

Programs involving rewards and reminder cards did not produce consistent results. Increased compliance with dental hygiene regimens were found when a variety of rewards was offered (Kegeles, Lund and Weisenberg, 1978). However, compliance returned to original levels when the incentives were removed.

c. Summary

While information/education programs generally yielded immediate increases in frequency of appropriate hygiene behavior, adherence to regimes declined rather steadily. In the case of incentive programs, adherence to dental hygiene regimes was generally maintained as long as the rewards were. Once rewards were removed, performance returned to original levels. Introduction of partial enforcement and self-management instruction did not significantly extend the effects of incentives.

D. Conclusions

The limitations on the breadth and depth of the literature review -- described at the outset -- restrict the conclusions presented below. Unpublished or very recently published literature could provide information

that substantially alters these conclusions. In particular, studies attempting to modify child belt use following passage of belt use laws may have produced or may yet produce results that would lead to new conclusions.

The results of the studies of child safety belt use bear strong similarities to the results of studies from the collateral areas of street-crossing behavior and dental hygiene behavior. Results from all three areas are also consistent with what is known of child learning in general.

Conclusions are discussed under the following aspects of child safety belt use:

- Effectiveness of programs
- Duration of program effects
- Change agents
- Overcoming negative influences
- Implications for study of "Strategies to Increase Use of Safety Belts among Youngsters"

1. Effectiveness of Programs

The literature establishes clearly that child belt use, like other safety and health practices, can be significantly improved through both cognitive and motivational approaches. Generally speaking, the effectiveness of cognitive approaches, as represented by information and education programs, varies with the intensity of the programs. Programs consisting merely of short discussions or audiovisual presentations may improve knowledge, but will have relatively little impact on attitudes or behavior. Those programs having an impact upon behavior typically involve a variety of instructional approaches extending over many class periods.

The greatest changes in behavior result from programs that extend outside the classroom to provide practice and to develop experience in the

behaviors to be learned. While the greatest use of "hands on" instruction is found in studies involving street-crossing and dental hygiene behavior, examples are also found in the belt use literature.

On the motivational side, the use of extrinsic incentives in the form of awards for safety belt use appears to be effective in increasing the use of belts by children. Although the safety belt programs evaluated were not confined to children, they did offer incentives designed to appeal specifically to children.

The lack of strong relationships between measured attitudes and observed behavior suggests that measures of attitude change may not be valid indices of the effectiveness of programs in achieving increases in actual safety belt use. Also, significant interactions between location (urban vs. rural) and program effects indicate that different types of programs affect different segments of the community.

2. Duration of Program Effects

In virtually all of the programs reviewed, the effects of the programs involved lasted only as long as the programs themselves. This finding was true of programs in teaching proper street-crossing and dental hygiene practices, as well as those involving safety belt use. Among the information and education programs, the effects began to diminish shortly after the programs terminated (although some studies showed that the decline was not to previous levels). Few programs showed significant long-term effects, e.g., effects lasting more than a few months after the program ended. While the decline in performance appears to affect all types of programs, those programs that provide practice in behavior application may have a lingering effect -- as demonstrated in one study showing that original post-program levels of performance could be restored with minimal additional instruction.

Programs involving incentives showed little benefit once the incentives were withdrawn. The use of incentives was most extensively studied in

connection with dental hygiene, where programs tended to focus upon individuals whose behavior could be observed, rather than being community-wide. These studies showed performance beginning to decline even during the period in which rewards were offered, presumably as children got used to receiving them, and declining toward zero performance levels when they were no longer available.

The dependence of performance upon continuing encouragement points to the need for long-term rather than one-shot programs and for intrinsic (self motivation) rather than extrinsic (outside) motivations. This sentiment was echoed by a number of the country's safety education leaders, and was reflected in the K-12 traffic safety curriculum developed for NHTSA that incorporates activities for the school year.

3. Change Agents

Generating a long-term positive influence on child belt use is likely to require involvement of more than just the formal school system. The success of various adult-mediated efforts to modify the behavior of children points to the advantages of exploiting a wide range of change agents in attempting to improve the level of child safety belt use. While most of the studies involving adult-mediated efforts were those of street-crossing behavior, the findings apply to safety belt use as well.

Restraint-use differs from street crossing or dental hygiene in a very unique way: Unlike street crossing or tooth brushing, an adult or older sibling is always present when the desired belt use behavior is expected to occur. The advantages of adult-mediated efforts include the ability to: (a) extend the duration of cognitive and motivational programs over time, (b) influence behavior at the point it is required, that is, when the child enters a vehicle, (c) offer a wide range of incentives and to continue them almost indefinitely (something that cannot be achieved through most publicly supported incentive programs).

In terms of adult-mediated influence, parents are the most frequent source. However, at least two other potential sources of direct positive influence are identified in the literature:

Family Members, including relatives and older siblings, as well as carpool drivers, teachers driving children on field trips and other adults directly influence children's belt use.

School Personnel, located at points where children arrive and leave in private cars, furnish reminders to buckle up.

Adults are also involved in the development, production and delivery of influential messages through the following efforts directed at children:

School Materials, used to teach reading and other subjects, describe the benefits of safety belt wear and debunk myths commonly held by children.

Mass Media (including children's radio and television programs as well as materials written for children) present safety belt information.

These various adult-mediated resources have not been extensively tried or evaluated relative to safety belts. Similarly, child belt use programs targeted at adults as role models or as monitors have not been presented or tested.

4. Overcoming Negative Influences

Equal in importance to increasing positive influences for safety belt use is lessening negative influences. Such influences can include the following:

Overestimation -- Most adults tend to overestimate the abilities of small children and employ instructional techniques that children are incapable of understanding or carrying out. There is also some overestimation on the part of educators as to the complexity of parent-mediated safety and health procedures parents are prepared to employ.

Negative Approaches -- There is some evidence to the effect that efforts by parents to encourage safety belt use through such "negative" approaches as scolding, nagging, and punishing not only fail to achieve their objective, but actually reduce the incidence of desired behavior.

Efforts to involve parents as change agents must assure that they are guided in more positive forms of instruction for using positive incentives.

Caretaking -- A child's need to learn is often ignored by adults who carry out certain aspects of the task for children -- crossing guards deciding when it is safe to pass, parents buckling children in. While these steps assure immediate safety, they thwart learning and may undermine efforts to modify long-term behavior.

Unbelted Role Models -- A number of efforts have been undertaken to increase the use of safety belts among child role models, particularly in the movies and on television. While these specific efforts have not been evaluated for their effect, they are supported by research dealing more generally with the effect of public figures and other adults, including parents, upon the behavior of children.

Unbelted Travel -- Each instance of unbelted travel not only exposes the child to danger but provides reinforcement of the perception that belts are not needed. The extent to which use of safety belts on school buses carries over to use in private vehicles is an issue that has been widely debated but not subject to well-controlled research.

5. Implications for Study of "Strategies to Increase Use of Safety Belts by Youngsters"

The literature review was not useful in terms of selecting sites, writing actual descriptions of program strategies or developing the discussion guides for the focus groups. Rather, the review supported the qualitative research design selected for the project in these general areas:

- Including parents as well as children as focus group participants.
- Testing program strategies featuring incentives.
- Testing program strategies involving school, community and enforcement activities.
- Examining the attitudes and behaviors of safety belt users and non-users.

III. FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADERS

This chapter presents the findings from the focus groups with third, fourth and fifth graders. These topics are covered in this section:

- Passenger experience
- Child safety seat/safety belt experience
- Attitudes about safety belts
- Influence of parents/grandparents/siblings/peers
- Awareness of and attitudes about safety belt use laws
- Program options
 - School-based programs
 - Enforcement-based programs
 - Parent/peer pressure programs
 - Belt use reminder signs
- Preference for programs
- Comparison of belt users and non-users

A. Passenger Experience

Overall, in terms of their experiences as passengers in motor vehicles, safety belt users and non-users in the third, fourth and fifth grades did not seem to differ. The vast majority said that they ride in a car every day. Their trips were usually to school or to school-related activities such as dance lessons or to local stores.

For most children, the primary driver was the mother, although many fathers shared in the driving. Older siblings and grandparents also served as

For most children, the primary driver was the mother, although many fathers shared in the driving. Older siblings and grandparents also served as drivers. Many children had carpooling experiences as well -- for school and school-related activities.

Children in these grades tended to ride in the rear seat of the vehicle more often than in the front seat. Many of the children were riding in vans and in station wagons. Some admitted to riding in the rear sections of the vehicle where safety belts are not available.

B. Child Safety Seat/Safety Belt Experience

Of all the groups included in the research study, third, fourth and fifth graders were the most likely to have benefitted from child safety seat legislation and/or education. The vast majority of both current users and non-users of safety belts seemed certain that they had used car seats. A majority of children with younger siblings reported that these brothers and sisters now use car seats. Most participants did not recall when they stopped using safety seats, giving estimates between four and six years of age.

Most participants did not remember using "booster" seats. They seemed to believe that they had gone directly from safety seats to safety belts. There was little discussion about their transition from seats to belts.

Only a few children seemed to be truly full-time belt users. One child with a sense of humor answered the question about the possibility of not being buckled up by saying that he is not buckled up only when he is not in the car.

In some instances, these youngsters did not use belts because there were "more kids (in the car) than belts" or because there were no belts in the rear of certain vehicles. Some children claimed to forget to buckle up or to find the belts uncomfortable, especially the shoulder strap. Some claimed to use the belt improperly by putting the shoulder strap behind their body.

Children buckled up much more frequently in the front seat, believing that there is more risk attached to not buckling up in the front seat. The front seat was described as more dangerous, and many talked about the possibility of going through the windshield in a crash. They said that back-seat passengers are protected by the front seat.

Position in the car was a factor in the buckling up behavior of non-users. Some non-users were more likely to buckle up when they were riding in the front seat. Otherwise, as one explained, if he were unbuckled and in a crash, he might "bash my face in the dashboard" in the case of a crash.

Even though half of the participants were recruited on the basis of reported safety belt use, virtually all third, fourth and fifth graders admitted that they do not use safety belts on some occasions. Children reported that belt use depends on a variety of factors, including where they are going, who is driving, the weather, the time of day and the type of highway. Generally, non-use was associated with short trips, such as to the grocery store.

Users could describe when they did not use a belt, and conversely non-users could tell about the reasons for using a belt: One non-user used his belt only when riding in a car on the Dan Ryan (a major expressway in Chicago). Another non-user said, "If it's snowing, my mother tells me to buckle up." Some non-users said that their occasional use of a safety belt "depends on how far we're going."

They said that they noticed if other children and adults were not buckled up. Users and non-users were aware of belt use by siblings, with a number of children describing their younger brothers and sisters who climbed out of car seats. They also talked about younger siblings who resist being put in car seat.

Many described their friends' buckling up behavior. They characterized non-users as "hot shots," as children who "don't listen" and need to "learn their lesson." Users were described as "serious."

Some children claimed to buckle up automatically without being asked. "I just put it on," said one child. Others indicated that parents provided reminders. Several non-users talked about not always obeying when asked to buckle up.

Compared to other age groups, the third, fourth and fifth graders seemed less aware of the specific provisions of the laws in Illinois and New York regarding the driver and front-seat passengers as well as back-seat passengers of certain ages. Even the older children (fifth graders) who were not required to buckle up in the rear seat under the law were informed about that provision.

C. Attitudes about Safety Belts

Regardless of their use patterns, children believed that safety belts save lives and reduce injuries. The vast majority were aware of the consequences of not wearing safety belts: injury or death as well as tickets. Their actual experience did not always support this belief because they could not cite one instance when using a safety belt made a difference or when a ticket was issued.

Many children cited cases of family members who were in crashes. However, they did not always know whether injuries would have been reduced by belt use. Even when they themselves had been in crashes, they reported little, if any, injury.

D. Influence of Parents/Grandparents/Siblings/Peers

To a large extent, the attitudes and behavior of these students toward belt use were shaped by the adults in their environment. Many said that they

do "what my Mom tells me." Non-users seemed more likely to attribute their non-use to the lack of enforcement by their parents. They differentiated their belt use according to the buckling up habit of the parent driving. In fact, more non-users had parents with different practices and policies about buckling up.

In most cases, parents who use safety belts required their children to buckle up. In other cases, parents (whether or not buckled) tended to relax safety requirements when the children no longer needed the car seat. Differences between the buckling up behavior of mothers and fathers had a definite impact on the child, because the child does not buckle up if the non-user parent is driving.

Parents who were not belt users were described as less insistent about their children's belt use. "My mother doesn't care" and "My father doesn't care" were comments offered by two non-users.

There seemed to be some resentment about parents' requiring children to use belts but not doing so themselves. "I just hate it. They say put on your safety belt, but they never put it on," complained one child. They generally believed that parents required buckling up for the child's safety.

Children believed that the "Mom's supposed to show a good example for the kids." Many did think, however, that buckling up children is more important.

Grandparents were mentioned as important influences. In some families, grandparents required belt use when parents did not. A number of non-users reported that grandparents were more likely to require buckling up.

Older siblings and friends who drive dictated buckling up behavior although not always in positive ways. One student described an older friend who makes his younger passengers buckle up because he drives too fast.

Children were reminded to buckle up by both younger and older siblings. Children who were non-users were not likely to remind others about belt use.

E. Awareness of and Attitudes about Safety Belt Use Law

Children generally seemed aware of the law, if not particularly knowledgeable about such specifics as the amount of the fine. They seemed to know that some provisions of the law were related to the age and front or back-seat position of the passenger. They generally had no experience with the law's enforcement. Very few children had parents who had received tickets. These children said that the tickets did not motivate their parents to use belts.

They generally believed that the law was a good idea although they seemed unconvinced that getting a fine will motivate people to buckle up for long periods. They viewed the law as "for your safety."

Non-users were more likely to see law enforcement as ineffective. "They don't really enforce (the law)," said one student.

F. Program Options

Third, fourth and fifth graders seemed favorable to all broad categories of program options. Specific findings are presented below in these categories:

- School-based programs
- Enforcement-related programs
- Parent/peer pressure programs
- Belt use reminder signs

1. School-based Programs

Third, fourth and fifth graders seemed particularly comfortable with school-based programs where teachers talk about safety belt use in the classroom. "It's a good idea to talk about in school," offered one student. "It's definitely important to have safety belts talked about in school," said another. One skeptic, however, wondered how a teacher would know if students use belts.

Many youngsters cited occasions when teachers talked about belt use. "We hear a lot about it," said one student. Another student mentioned a teacher who had been in a crash and talked about the benefits of using a belt. In their view, a teacher could talk about "all the things that could happen to you (getting injured or killed or getting a ticket)." They thought that talking about the importance of safety belts was "important" because "it's the law."

Despite their support for school-based programs, third, fourth and fifth graders -- like the older participants -- thought that the programs would most benefit children younger than themselves: preschoolers and kindergarten students primarily. "They're good for everybody but especially for kindergarten through second grade," said one student. They said that stressing safety belts is best when children "are just getting out of car seats" so that they could develop good habits.

They were familiar and comfortable with safety belts as a topic in health, gym and even social studies classes. They recalled safety belts being mentioned by police officers and fire fighters who visit elementary school classrooms to talk about public safety.

2. Enforcement-related Programs

Even though students quickly noticed that the occupants of the car in the illustration were not buckled up, they did not believe that the occupants

were concerned about the issue. The occupants were interested in "where they're going" -- they were not concerned about getting a ticket or being in a crash. Safety belts were not "on their minds."

Johnny's mother was described as careless by some participants. Other youngsters could not accept the idea that Johnny's mother did not care about him or his sister -- she was just "distracted."

One non-user thought that Johnny was worried about himself and his sister. Some youngsters seemed to think Johnny should take responsibility for his sister. One user thought that Johnny might be worried about being in a crash. Another user suggested that Johnny might be concerned enough to remind his mother to buckle up and put the sister in a car seat.

Interestingly, both users and non-users started coloring in belts. One student even made a special request for a black marker so that his drawing would be realistic. Others, however, agreed that belts could be many colors. Some laughed at the notion of fluorescent colors.

These students supported the giving of tickets and warnings. Many thought that there would be consequences of not buckling up. One student said that fines would be given for all three persons, and estimated the total at \$150.

They definitely saw Johnny at risk for not using a safety belt. "He might fly over the seat," said one child. Similarly, his baby sister was at serious risk for not being in a car seat. Even the mother was at risk: "Everybody would get hurt or might die," said one youngster.

Of particular interest, the majority of students believed that tickets should be given for all unbuckled occupants, not just the mother or just the children. Some students, especially non-users, were skeptical about tickets, believing that ticketing "doesn't happen often." Several thought that Johnny

would be upset and angry if his mother got a ticket. One non-user suggested that Johnny's mother "would try to get out of the ticket."

Although they thought that a ticket was warranted, they did not think that a ticket would stimulate long-term change in behavior: "Some people won't ever get the message," said one child. Half of the users thought that ticketing "wouldn't help." Johnny might buckle up for some time but not "forever." One student described his father who had received a ticket but "didn't buckle up after."

In response to the question, "Who will get the message?" these answers were given: "Smart people people who care about their lives." "Successful people." "People who are smart." "People who have something to care about."

More so than any other age groups, the third, fourth and fifth graders seemed especially amenable to the safety belt salute, because "little children are fond of officers." They thought that the salute would work, especially with children, and would be especially popular with younger children -- preschool, kindergarten, first and second grades. "It's a good idea, it encourages people to buckle up," said one child.

The salute was viewed as a nice reminder, a "positive reminder." "It would work for everyone," suggested one child. Students thought that the salute might prompt Johnny to buckle up and to remind his mother to do so.

3. Peer/Parent Pressure Programs

In terms of influencing the non-users, the users tended to see difficulties with parent/peer pressure programs. Some users and non-users seemed willing to ask their friends to buckle up but were unsure about the long-term success of such a program.

Most seemed willing to ask their parents, grandparents and other relatives to sign a pledge card to buckle up. Some seemed willing to ask their friends although they were uncertain about the results. "They might not sign, and they might not buckle up," said one child. "It's not a great idea," offered another student about the pledge card idea. No one seemed especially eager to ask neighbors. Some students seemed more willing to ask younger children. Several students talked about their difficulties in trying to persuade their parents to quit smoking.

The pledge card program seemed to provide support and legitimacy to their efforts -- parents would sign anything having to do with school! They claimed, "It's a lot easier to talk them into it if it comes from school."

Some students seemed to think that their parents would not listen or might sign without any strong commitment: "Yeah, sure, anything for your class project." They also used phrases such as "bugging my Dad" and "My Dad ignores me a lot." More generally, many believed they people would sign "just for the heck of it."

In giving Johnny advice on how to approach his father about signing a pledge card, children suggest that he ask "Nicely." Johnny should talk about the consequences of not using a belt and stress how much he cares that his father not get hurt.

Reactions varied about the length of time to require a promise -- from a few weeks to "a really long time" to "forever." These students seemed to think that a longer time period was needed so that the program "would work." Reactions also varied about how long people would keep their pledges.

In terms of incentives for pledging to buckle up, third, fourth and fifth graders seemed more likely than the other age groups to favor rewards such as pizza parties which older children did not consider attractive. They actually had lots of ideas for rewards, with many related to a release from regular school activities (extra recess, a day off, no homework, a field

trip). Again, they predicted that the most successful efforts would be with younger children in kindergarten through second and third grade.

4. Belt Use Reminder Signs

Third, fourth and fifth graders liked the signs, especially if the signs appear in bright colors. They believed that children will notice the signs and will be reminded to buckle up. They said that signs also help the children remind the driver and other passengers to buckle up.

They generally seemed to be aware of such signs, primarily because the communities in which they live are near interstate road systems where many such signs are posted. They said that the buckle symbol and the words are both important. They suggested that signs can be placed in many areas -- highways, restaurants, toll booths.

G. Preference for Programs

Students were mixed in their program preferences. Some liked the safety belt salute. Others favored the highway signs. Still others supported school-based and peer/parent pressure programs.

H. Comparison of Users and Non-Users

Overall, users and non-users of safety belts were very similar in their attitudes about belts and programs. Non-users tended to be somewhat more skeptical about the potential for programs to be effective, especially enforcement-based programs.

The finding of particular note concerned the role of parents: Much of the non-use seemed related to the lack of parental enforcement and example. In families where there were differences in the buckling policies and practices of parents, children were more likely to be non-users. Yet, these non-users were users of child safety seats.

I. Promising Program Strategies

The greatest number of program strategies seemed applicable to this youngest group. The most promising program strategies are highlighted below.

- School-based programs seem to offer the most potential for third, fourth and fifth graders. Curriculum support is relevant to a number of areas, including social studies where the state law can be addressed. Social studies classrooms might provide a new point of entry for "Officer Friendly" efforts.
- Pledge card programs seem to have merit if designed for parents and possibly close friends. Third, fourth and fifth graders seem to need this program support to engage with adults about buckling up. They also seem particularly receptive to the types of "inexpensive" rewards possible (such as pizza parties) as well as school-related rewards (extra field trips, extra recess). However, the program must incorporate ways to overcome skepticism about cheating by pledge card signers; realistic measures of compliance should be devised.
- Children remember visits to school by law enforcement representatives. Programs should provide appropriate information to these representatives as well as materials for distribution.
- At least for this age group and younger children, the safety belt salute has merit.
- Highway signs are viewed as effective and might be more so if the graphics are coordinated with school materials such as the buttons given to children who participate in pledge card programs.
- Enforcement strategies should be considered because children of this age group are concerned about the consequences of not buckling. They think that tickets should be given for each unbuckled occupant.

IV. FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH SIXTH, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADERS

These topics are covered for the groups with sixth, seventh and eighth graders:

- Passenger experience
- Child safety seat/safety belt experience
- Attitudes about safety belts
- Influence of parents/grandparents/siblings/peers
- Awareness of and attitudes about safety belt use laws
- Program options
 - School curricula
 - School buses and extracurricular activities
 - Convincer demonstrations
 - Pledge cards
 - School-based contests
 - Testimonials
 - Enforcement with and without tickets for unbuckled children
 - Police-sponsored contests
 - Safety belt salute
 - Parent/peer pressure programs
 - Belt use reminder signs
- Preference for programs
- Comparison of users and non-users
- Promising program strategies

A. Passenger Experience

Safety belt users and non-users in these grades seemed to be similar to participants in the third, fourth and fifth grade groups in terms of their

experience as passengers in motor vehicles. Almost all of the participants said that they ride in a car every day, generally for some purpose other than travel to and from school. Most of the participants rode the bus or walked to school. A few rode in carpools, and one boy used his skateboard for transportation. Many children rode in vans and station wagons and did not buckle up.

The mother was the most frequent driver. Fathers, siblings, grandparents and other relatives also served as drivers.

Participants in these groups, like the third, fourth and fifth graders, seemed to ride in the rear seat more often. Interestingly, non-users were more likely to report that they ride in the front seat of the car. Users were "mostly in the back." They were much more likely to mention that safety belts are not required in the rear seat for children over a certain age. One participant said, "The front is the suicide seat." Two non-users reported buckling up when they ride in the front seat.

B. Child Safety Seat/Safety Belt Experience

All children reported that they had used child safety seats. They stopped using seats between the ages of 2 and 4 or 5. Their reasons for stopping varied from a younger sibling's needing the seat to "getting too big" for the seat. Only a few recalled the use of booster seats for a "short period of time."

More so than their counterparts in the third, fourth and fifth grades, the non-users seemed to be truly non-users. Even the users reported not wearing safety belts on a variety of occasions -- particularly on short trips. However, a few participants noted that accidents are more likely to happen closer to home. "It would be wiser to wear a seat belt on a short trip," said one participant.

Use seemed higher on expressways and, in the case of the Buffalo participants, in Canada where the safety belt use law is perceived to be strictly enforced. Other reasons for buckling up included long trips, who is driving and weather conditions.

As found in the younger groups, some participants reported riding in vehicles when there are more children than safety belts. Participants did not seem uncomfortable about being a car with not enough belts for everyone. One participant said that he had been in a car whose driver was stopped twice in one week for having too many passengers. Yet, no ticket was issued.

Users claimed to forget to buckle up. Very few seemed to buckle up automatically. Girls seemed slightly more likely to claim that they could not recall a time when they did not buckle up. Several users insisted that "I always wear it (safety belt)."

Users and non-users were willing to buckle up if asked. "I don't want to but I do," said one participant. Another commented, "I don't mind terribly." Several participants mentioned not wanting to be embarrassed when riding with friends who buckle up.

C. Attitudes about Safety Belts

Sixth, seventh and eighth graders believed that safety belts reduce injuries and save lives. One participant mentioned that an unbuckled person could injure another person in a crash. Another participant pointed out that using a belt enables the driver to recover control, possibly reducing the seriousness of the crash and avoiding going through the windshield.

Despite their belief in the effectiveness of safety belts, not one participant had a direct, personal experience of a crash. Several mentioned crashes in which friends and family members had been involved. Generally, they were "not sure if a seat belt made a difference." One participant

thought that her sister avoided being thrown through the windshield because she was buckled up.

One student's older sister had a friend killed in an accident recently, and now the friend and his other siblings were buckling up. He claimed that everyone in the family is now buckling up. A similar situation was described by another participant: His friend is now using a safety belt.

Some students complained that belts are uncomfortable, especially in hot weather. A few claimed to put the front belt's shoulder strap behind their backs. One participant talked about his fear of being trapped in a car during a fire.

D. Attitudes of Parents/Grandparents/Siblings/Peers

As found with the younger participants, parents had a significant impact on these youngsters' behavior. "My mother makes me buckle up," said one participant while another commented, "My Mom always reminds me." Although mothers were cited more often for reminding participants to buckle up, fathers were given credit, too. Grandparents were also mentioned as requiring belt use.

Participants' belt use seemed very related to their parents' behavior. If the parents buckled, the participants tended to buckle. "If my parents buckled, I would," said one non-user. Users were more likely to think that having parents buckle up is important.

In some families, the parents reminded each other as well as the children. In other cases, the children reminded their parents. Although safety was the most frequently mentioned reason for parents' requiring youngsters to buckle up, one child commented, "My mother reminds me that it's the law."

They were more likely not to use belts if their parents did not. One non-user argued, "My parents don't. Why should I?" If parents reminded the children to buckle up, they were more likely to do so. "If Mom says to put (it) on, I usually do," reported one participant.

Sometimes the participants reminded siblings to buckle up. They seemed willing to remind parents. For the most part, participants were willing to buckle up if asked. "I don't mind terribly," said one participant. Another commented, "I don't want to but I do."

Also of note was the finding that participants seemed rather nonchalant about whether their siblings buckle up. Some described the problems of keeping a young sibling in a car seat or "getting her into it." One participant said, "Telling younger kids to buckle up is hard 'cause they don't listen."

E. Awareness of and Attitudes about Safety Belt Use Law

More so than the third, fourth and fifth graders, these children were aware of the law in terms of the age at which children must be buckled in the rear seat. Some did not know the specific provisions. Others, especially non-users, talked knowledgeably about the age when buckling up in the rear seat is no longer required. One participant older than the age when belt use is required in the rear seat admitted that he never buckles up because he "sits in the back." Users were more likely to think that the law should require everyone to buckle up.

Some participants had mixed feelings about the law because of what they see as lack of enforcement. The comments included: "A law is nothing unless it's enforced." "It's a good idea but it's not enforced." "It's a good idea. It saves lives." "It's bad idea." "I don't think the law can be enforced because there are so many people who don't wear seat belts."

Some believed that police officers do not have to buckle up. "Why should I?" was the attitude they expressed.

Not one student knew about anyone receiving a ticket, and opinions about the amount of the possible fine varied. One participant reported that a driver of a car in which he was a passenger was stopped by the police twice and only warned.

A measure of their increased awareness about the law, compared to the younger participants, was their discussion about the law's being enforced on a secondary basis (driver must first be stopped for another violation). A few participants were aware that the violating the safety belt law was treated as a secondary offense. In their view, "Not many (safety belt violators) get caught."

A few students said that they buckled up more frequently after the law was passed. So did their parents. One participant described his father who buckles up now because of the law and requires his children to do so. Several non-users admitted to using belts less now than when the belt law was first enacted.

F. Program Options

As a whole, the sixth, seventh and eighth graders generally seemed unenthusiastic about safety belt programs. This lack of enthusiasm was particularly true of non-users. Like the younger students, they were skeptical -- about people keeping promises, about the authenticity of survivor testimonial videotapes and about the long-term effectiveness of any program.

1. School Curricula

Sixth, seventh and eighth graders did not welcome the topic of safety belts in the classroom. Non-users were less receptive to school-based programs. They believed that children in this age group simply "don't

listen." "They don't pay attention to teachers," commented one participant. "It hasn't worked; a lot of people still don't buckle," said another participant. They considered school-based programs to be more effective with younger kids.

One non-user mentioned that there is "a lot of stuff on drugs" and said schools should also cover safety belts. He suggested films in health class.

Interestingly, the participants did believe that the most of their teachers buckle up. Users were slightly more likely than non-users to notice whether teachers use belts.

2. School Buses and Teams

Students were always quick to point out that few buses have safety belts. Non-users opposed buckling up on buses because they want to move around and talk with their friends.

Participants, especially non-users, were not in favor of requiring team members to buckle up. They called this proposed program "too strict," "silly" and "stupid." "It's not fair," said one participant while another commented, "I'd protest." Another suggested that parents would complain. Some thought that the coach could set a safety belt rule but were not sure if the coach would do so.

Users and non-users seemed in accord. One non-user said, "The kids wouldn't do it. The teachers wouldn't enforce it." A user said, "They couldn't do it. They couldn't enforce it."

3. Convincer

The majority of students believed that the Convincer, a device which simulates the impact of a crash, would be perceived as a fun ride. Many would be willing to try the Convincer, especially non-users. One participant expressed concern about the possibility of getting hurt. Another thought that people "would be afraid to go on it."

Another participant thought that the speed of the demonstration vehicle is not fast enough. Some thought that the device would not work with older kids.

4. Pledge Cards

"No way" was the response of many sixth, seventh and eighth graders, especially non-users, about getting people to sign pledge cards. First, they were skeptical whether people would keep their promises. "I don't think it would work. They would sign but not do it," said one participant. Another commented, "I don't trust people."

Some students talked about their unsuccessful efforts to get their parents to quit smoking. They described asking often and "trying hard but nothing seemed to work."

Participants wanted to know how behavior can be observed and what happens if the pledges are not kept. They also wanted to know how to determine if people are using belts as a result of making a pledge.

About half of the non-users were willing to sign and they "might" ask others. "They might like the challenge." Others were not willing to sign pledge cards or to ask others to do.

They thought that pledge cards might work with younger children. "Little kids might think that pledge cards are 'neat,'" said one participant. Students saw a very short time period, usually a week, as reasonable for a pledge.

5. School Contests

Skepticism was very evident in this program area -- people might simply participate by signing a pledge just for the prize and there would be no long-lasting effects in terms of observed use rates. The idea was viewed as

"silly." "Nobody else would do it," predicted one participant. "I'd be embarrassed and my friends would tease me," said another participant.

Appealing prizes varied from money (favored by non-users) to pizza parties to no homework. School-oriented prizes, such as extra field trips, additional art supplies and more assemblies, had no appeal. "Something good" as a prize might entice more participants, especially non-users, suggested several students.

Users seemed slightly less skeptical; they seemed to want such a program to work. One girl said the people who participated "might realize (buckling up) is not that much of a bother." "A contest gets more people involved."

6. Testimonials

Many students seemed receptive to true stories about the consequences of using or not using a safety belt. "The best so far" was how one participant described this program idea. "There's proof," said one participant. These stories should be about people who had lost something (a limb, an eye, etc.) or had been injured seriously (e.g., paralyzed) in order to "scare kids" and "show what could happen to you." The participants suggested that testimonials be given by someone their own age or in the same grade. There did not seem to be much enthusiasm for testimonials by celebrities. The boys wanted more realism, suggesting hospital scenes and pictures of severely injured people.

The skepticism was revealed in these comments: "Oh sure, you're (the person giving the testimony) just doing it for money." "It wouldn't work at my school. Nobody listens to anything."

As found in the younger groups, videotapes were viewed more skeptically than the in-person testimony: "They're actors." "How do you know it's true?"

7. Enforcement with and without Tickets for Unbuckled Children

Despite the theory that ticketing parents will encourage them to remind their children to buckle up, sixth, seventh and eighth graders proved to be egalitarians. They not only believed that everyone should get a ticket, many also stated that everyone should have to buckle up, regardless of age. "It doesn't really matter what your age is," said one participant.

They saw the driver as responsible for the buckling up behavior of passengers and agreed that the driver should be fined. "The driver is responsible and should be in control of the car," said one participant. Some seemed to think that if the driver got a ticket, he "would make people buckle up and remind them." One participant said that he would take a strong position, "This is my car -- get out and walk."

"If you could get a ticket, you would buckle," advised one participant. If the children had to pay the fine, they would buckle up. Some believed that their parents would buckle up and remind them to buckle up if the parents received tickets.

The likelihood of buckling might be increased if students had to pay the fine or receive some other penalty such as "being grounded." "It might mean something" if students had to pay fines out of their allowances.

The police-sponsored contest was viewed as ineffective and prompted giggles. "It wouldn't work" was the attitude of many participants.

8. Safety Belt Salute

Non-users definitely did not favor the salute, stating that many people would not notice and even so, no long-lasting behavioral change would occur. Participants suggested that people would unbuckle afterward. Some saw the program as "silly" and "ridiculous" and suggest that perhaps "little kids"

might respond favorably. When asked to specify an age, they mentioned preschool, kindergarten and the first grade -- "little kids."

9. Parent/Peer Pressure Programs

Many students in this age group did not believe that their parents would sign the pledge cards. Some thought that parents would sign anything related to school but little would result. Others said that their "parents wouldn't sign."

This program was viewed as working better for "little kids." Little kids were described as "more truthful" and more likely to keep promises.

Although some expressed skepticism about whether the program would work, they seemed willing to ask friends. Conversely, they would not pay attention to a pledge card request from younger kids but would "possibly from a friend." One boy thought he might persuade friends by saying, "Buckle up or I'll beat you up." Another participant suggested this message: "If you don't buckle up, you're just hurting yourself."

Non-users were definitely not interested in programs where they have to interact with friends about safety belts. They were concerned about being embarrassed and having friends think they are "weird."

10. Belt Use Reminder Signs

(This program option was not discussed in all four groups). Non-users flatly described this option as "wasting money." Users seemed more receptive to signs -- "a lot of them" -- as reminders to buckle up. Some questioned the effectiveness of signs, indicating that "they wouldn't pay attention." One participant commented, "My friends aren't in the car with me most of the time."

11. Insurance

(This program option was not discussed in all four groups). Non-users were very favorable to the option of increased insurance premiums if ticketed for non-belt use: "It could be a real incentive." Parents would buckle and make kids buckle."

G. Preference for Programs

The only program that seemed to stand out for these youngsters as a whole is stricter enforcement. Non-users seemed especially resistant to programs about safety belts. Users preferred testimonials.

H. Comparison of Users and Non-users

There were several noteworthy differences between users and non-users of safety belts. First, users were more likely to have parents who use safety belts and who expect their children to do so. Non-users were more likely to ride in the front seat, with some realizing that buckling up in the front seat is particularly important.

Users and non-users had a lot in common in terms of attitudes and behavior. Both users and non-users had used child safety seats but not booster seats. Both users and non-users recognized the safety benefits of buckling up and were willing to buckle up if asked. Users were more likely to consider the belt use law favorably but both groups thought that enforcement was inadequate. They both agreed that the driver is responsible and should ask passengers to buckle up.

In terms of program strategies, users seemed more skeptical about pledge cards and contests. Some users liked the concept of testimonials although both groups favored this program approach. Both groups tended to believe that the program strategies would be more effective with younger children.

I. Promising Program Strategies

There were several program elements that seemed to be important in reaching the sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Highlights are presented below.

- This group seems more difficult to reach directly than the younger group of third, fourth and fifth graders, especially because of their lack of enthusiasm for school-based programs and the lack of agreement about attractive prizes. What seems important is developing programs that address their skepticism and make buckling up seem like a more mature and desirable behavior.
- Although videotapes must be approached carefully because of the perceptions associated with a program being "staged," demonstrating the consequences of belt non-use seems to have significant potential. Where possible, there seems to be a need to develop a campaign plan that uses local and state police or incidents to reinforce the videotape.
- Certainly, programs aimed at getting parents and grandparents to remind children to buckle up seem to have particular merit with this age group that is still heavily influenced by adults.

V. FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS WITH NINTH AND TENTH GRADERS

These topics are covered for the groups with ninth and tenth graders:

- Passenger experience
- Child safety seat/safety belt experience
- Attitudes about safety belts
- Influence of parents/grandparents/siblings/peers
- Awareness of and attitudes about safety belt use laws
- Program options
 - School curricula
 - School buses and teams
 - Convincer
 - Pledge cards
 - School contests
 - Testimonials
 - Enforcement with and without tickets for unbuckled children
 - Police-sponsored contests
 - Safety belt salute
 - Parent/peer pressure programs
 - Belt use reminder signs
 - Insurance programs
 - Driver's license/learner's permit
- Preference for programs
- Comparison of users and non-users
- Promising program strategies

A. Passenger Experience

In terms of their experience as passengers in motor vehicles, safety belt users and non-users in these grades seemed to be somewhat different from the younger children. They tended to be more likely to ride in the front seat. They were more likely to ride without parents, that is, with older siblings and friends who have driver's licenses. Some students had learner's permits and actual driving experience.

They were similar in several ways. They usually rode in a car everyday. The mother was the most frequent driver. Their trips were usually to school or to school-related activities, as well as for shopping.

B. Child Safety Seat/Safety Belt Experience

As might be expected because of their age, ninth and tenth graders were less likely than their younger counterparts to remember using child safety seats. Almost all seemed to think that they used these seats but no one was certain. Nor did anyone remember using a booster seat. (Note: Students in this age group were infants and toddlers before child safety seat laws were common and can therefore be expected to have less recall of using such seats. There was no discussion of their transition from seats to belts.)

Very few users reported that they always buckle up. Some buckled up only when riding in the front seat. Many did not buckle up on short trips or when "just going down the street."

Many said that they buckled up when requested. A few of the non-users, who at first claimed never to buckle up, admitted to buckling up at someone else's request. Although ninth and tenth graders were willing to buckle up if asked, they were not willing to ask. Non-users seemed particularly reluctant to ask. However, students with driver's permits seemed more likely to ask their passengers to buckle up because they "want a clean driving record."

They said that belt use depends on who is driving, the weather conditions (buckling up is more frequent in rain or snow), the type of highway (buckling up occurs more often on expressways), the driver's policy (if the driver requires buckling up) and driver/passenger behavior (if the driver and other passengers buckle up). Some participants were more likely to buckle up when riding with friends they did not consider to be good drivers.

Users talked about buckling up in terms of a habit. Several respondents buckled up because the car is equipped with automatic belts. One boy's father required his son to buckle up in the company car.

C. Attitudes about Safety Belts

Like their younger counterparts, ninth and tenth graders believed that safety belts reduce injuries and save lives. One student said that he would not have broken his arm in a crash if he had been using a safety belt. Several students who had learner's permits and had seen a crash film in driver's education were convinced about the benefits of belts -- they now buckle.

Some non-users expressed the belief that "it won't happen to them." "You're not going to know what's going to happen until it happens" was the fatalistic view of some students. They did not perceive the risk or chose to ignore it: "We don't think about it." "We're just beginning life. We don't think about death."

Both users and non-users were aware of the safety belt habits of their friends. Non-users were more likely to believe that their friends do not buckle up. "Most people I know don't buckle," said one participant. "Very few kids our age buckle up," said another participant. Moreover, they estimated that a small proportion of the population buckles up, and were quick to include police officers in the non-user category. "It's rare that you get in the car and anyone buckles," said one participant.

Like the younger children, ninth and tenth graders had this universal complaint about shoulder belts: "They are uncomfortable." They also provided these comments about why people do not use belts: "(They) don't see the need (for safety belts)." "(They're) lazy." "They don't think about it."

As found in many adult discussions about safety belts, there were a few students who mentioned that using a safety belt could be more hazardous in an accident. One child in the Chicago non-user group actually claimed that he would not have been able to get out of the car after a crash if he had been using a belt.

D. Influence of Parents/Grandparents/Siblings/Peers

Ninth and tenth graders connected their buckling up behavior to that of others more so than younger respondents. If their parents buckled up, older children were more likely to buckle up than if parents did not buckle up. "I might buckle more if my parents did," said one participant. "I believe that parents make a difference," said another. One participant said, "Younger kids buckle because their parents make them."

Students reported being asked to buckle up by family and friends. The girlfriend of one participant's brother insisted on belt use or she stopped the car "for my own safety and well being." When asked where the girlfriend learned this practice, he answered, "From her mother and father." One participant's sister enforced a belt use policy. So did another participant's older brother. Some friends who recently got licenses implemented such policies, too.

Participants did not seem to mind being asked to buckle up -- "no big deal." However, they definitely were not willing to ask others, especially their friends.

They discussed the buckling up behavior of their siblings. They did not seem concerned or willing to encourage their family members to buckle up.

They seemed to consider themselves past the age of safety belt programs. They agreed that "little kids" (usually defined as preschool and elementary ages) should be the target of programs so that they develop the buckling up habit.

Non-users were much more likely to have parents who do not buckle and who do not require their children to buckle up. Non-users thought that only "nerds and older people" buckle up. They called people who buckle up "weird." When asked why their friends do not insist on belt use, they answered, "It's not cool to buckle up. It's nerdy looking."

Students generally buckled up if asked by their parents. "I put it on when they get on my nerves about it."

Several mentioned their increased use of belts after the death of a classmate or relative. One student buckled up more often after a crash when he was told by the ambulance driver, "You would have been a lot better off (with a safety belt)."

E. Awareness of and Attitudes about Safety Belt Law

Ninth and tenth graders seemed especially unaffected by the law, because "They don't stop you." "It's not really doing anything," said one participant. They held strong opinions about the fact that the law is not enforced, could not be enforced and is not followed by police officers. Enforcement would mean having a lot of "cars all lined up on the side of the road" with drivers waiting to be ticketed. Non-users claimed to "fake it (using a belt)" when they see a police officer. One student whose father is a public safety employee claimed that his father does not buckle up nor does the father expect his son to do so.

Virtually all students were unaware of any instances where tickets were issued. One non-user's boyfriend had gotten a ticket several weeks ago but still does not buckle up. The student did not remember how much the fine was.

Some users talked favorably about the law. "The law is a good idea. It's for people's safety," said one user. Users thought that belt use should be required for "everybody in the front seat and all kids."

Most significant, Illinois children were well aware of the secondary enforcement status of the law. New York children knew that the law is actually enforced on a secondary basis. Children were aware of stricter enforcement of safety belt use laws in other jurisdictions (Indiana and Canada).

Some claimed that they buckled up more frequently immediately after the law was passed but then stopped because "Nobody got a ticket." They attributed some of the law-related use to being reminded to buckle up by parents and others.

Ninth and tenth graders were quite aware of the law's provision setting the age when belt use is required in the rear seat. One student claimed that his brother cannot wait until he is "old enough not to have to buckle" (10 years old and not required to buckle in the rear seat).

F. Program Options

Ninth and tenth graders, especially non-users, were even less enthusiastic about safety belt programs than the younger students. In fact, engaging some in a discussion about belts was nearly impossible -- they simply were not interested. They seemed more favorable to insurance and enforcement programs, including one linked to eligibility to obtain a driver's license. Like the younger students, they were skeptical except that they take their skepticism one step farther -- they did not believe that people keep promises so they would not be willing to ask them to sign safety belt pledge cards.

1. School Curricula

They believed that children in general and their age group in particular "don't pay attention...don't listen." School-based programs would not be effective except possibly for students in elementary school and for preschoolers who could "get into the habit."

They could not imagine how safety belts could be discussed in math class and saw the topic as more related to health class. However, one student pointed out that health class is not offered to every grade level every semester. The safety belt message needed to get to "all classes," in his opinion.

They did not see teachers arriving at school. Therefore, they did not seem especially interested in a requirement that teachers buckle up.

2. School Buses and Teams

This topic generated a lot of skeptical reactions, because most school buses do not have safety belts. They did not believe that the bus driver would or could enforce buckling up. "That's a joke," said one participant. Being forced to use safety belts on buses might mean that "You'd get to hate (using belts) more."

Especially for non-users, the idea of a coach making them buckle up as part of training requirements similar to "no drinking, get plenty of sleep" did not seem realistic. Again, their attitude seemed to be that "Kids don't listen," even to coaches. They did not see the relationship between participation on sports teams and using safety belts on school-buses or in cars going to or from events.

3. Convincer

Unlike younger respondents, a few of the ninth and tenth graders were aware of the device. Students saw this device as "a ride" that would have little effect on their safety belt use. "I would take it as a joke," said one non-user. Some participants thought that the demonstration "might convince" students and might work "for a while."

4. Pledge Cards

Here again there was substantial skepticism, with these reactions: "How would you know if the person broke a promise." "(The person) would take it off (after being observed)." "People might sign but they wouldn't do it." "You'd put it on right before you (get to school)." "You're not going to know if the person is breaking a promise." "The person will take off the belt after leaving (the parking lot where observations are being made)."

Pledging to use a safety belt was not viewed as an "important promise." Pledge cards were viewed as possibly effective for only a very short period of time. One student's estimate of "an hour" resulted in gales of laughter. Another said, "I might do it the first day but would quickly forget about it." One user predicted that the cards would be found in "the garbage." Some respondents were willing to ask their parents to sign cards but asking friends was considered unlikely.

"Silly" was how many ninth and tenth graders consider the idea of pledge cards. A few might consider pledge cards as a challenge "to see how long I'd go."

Their willingness to participate in a pledge card program was directly tied to the value of the prizes. Prizes would have to be "big ticket" items - a pizza party was viewed "as no big deal." Desirable prizes included a vacation in the Bahamas, a compact disc player, money (at least \$50), maybe dinner at "a fancy restaurant." (Note: Respondents were recruited to represent a broad range of household incomes.)

A few users were somewhat concerned about the prizes. "You should follow the (safety belt) rule without a prize. The prize is saving your life," said one user. Another user questioned why there should be any reward given for obeying the law.

5. School Contests

Only nerds were viewed as taking such an activity as a contest seriously. Ninth and tenth graders might participate in a contest but they saw themselves as not keeping their promises. "I might lie." "People might cheat." "They're not going to know if you're wearing it." "People will get the prize and go on their merry way."

Participation was evaluated in terms of prizes. "It depends on how good the prizes are," said one participant.

Contests were viewed as potentially more effective with "little kids" (below fifth grade). Little kids were perceived as more honest.

6. Testimonials

Ninth and tenth graders agreed with the younger students in terms of the effectiveness of such programs and the need for as much realism as possible. Videotapes of celebrities were viewed as less effective than a personal appearance by someone who "shows what could happen (when not using a safety belt) in a crash." If the person is a friend or classmate, the message would be considered particularly powerful. "It's more convincing in person," said one respondent. A videotape was described as "staged" and "less believable."

Respondents thought that the testimony could be given about how a person was saved by using a belt or about the injuries received because of not buckling up. Some students believed that these programs would be short-term in effect, pointing to movies about smoking and lung cancer: "It works for a while."

7. Enforcement with and without Tickets for Unbuckled Children

Most students saw value in an enforcement program because if parents are ticketed, they will certainly require buckling up by their children. "(Parents) would get on their kids' case more." A few students, however, thought that ticketing just parents "won't help." "It's more effective if the tickets are for kids," said one respondent.

Unlike their counterparts, ninth and tenth graders did not seem concerned about the "equity issue" of having tickets issued for every unbuckled person, whether child or adult. Rather, they seemed particularly concerned about the total cost if every unbuckled person gets a ticket. They definitely seemed willing to buckle up if they had to pay the fine.

They seemed the most skeptical about the effectiveness of this program because of their perception that the law is not enforced. They raised questions about how an officer can determine the age of a child or whether people are buckled up.

8. Police-sponsored Contests

Breaking into laughter, students saw a contest as "stupid." They could not envision the police being involved in such an activity: "They've got enough else to worry about." Some students wondered how the contest would be managed in terms of observations of belt use and the odds of winning.

As found with other incentive programs, there was some objection. "Why should they pay someone to save your own life? You should just wear it," said one participant.

9. Safety Belt Salute

They saw the salute as impossible simply because students perceive that police officers do not buckle up. Even if the police do use belts, students were skeptical that police would be willing to salute. "Ridiculous" and

"stupid" was how ninth and tenth graders described this program. Even users laughed at this idea.

10. Parent/Peer Pressure Programs

Ninth and tenth graders were simply not interested, because their friends "might think you're queer." Again, they would be willing to buckle up if asked but do not want to ask. "They might think I'm sick." "If I don't like buckling, why should they?" "No one cares about safety belts."

Some of these teenagers seemed reluctant to ask their parents because they did not want to "bug" their parents or create an opportunity to be "yelled at." Some students keyed into the idea of loving their family and friends and not wanting them to get hurt -- that is a message they might be able to deliver in getting more people buckled up. A few students were receptive to the idea: "If you like your friends and want to keep them around." "The people you love -- you don't want to see them hurt."

11. Belt Use Reminder Signs

This program option generated laughter from both users and non-users. Signs were not viewed as effective by non-users.

12. Insurance Programs

(This program was not discussed in all four groups). Compared to younger children, ninth and tenth graders were in accord about this program in which insurance premiums would be increased if tickets for non-belt use were received: "It would work with everybody." To them, substantial pocketbook issues were very important. This program was viewed as potentially very effective. In the words of some students, the program could be a "stopper," especially "for the guys."

13. Driver's License/Learner's Permit

(Some of the groups discussed the possibility of a delay in obtaining a driver's license or learner's permit if ticketed for not buckling up.) This program was viewed as effective, because if pre-drivers buckled up until they got their license, they "might get into the habit." Older students seemed comfortable with the idea of students with permits/licenses requiring passengers to buckle up: "No belt, no ride." In a few instances, they planned to have such a rule when they start driving. They disagreed about the idea of having points on a driver's license for not buckling up.

G. Preference for Programs

Non-users overwhelmingly supported the insurance program. Users and non-users alike favored enforcement-related programs and programs using testimony about the consequences of using/not using safety belts.

H. Comparison of Users and Non-users

These chief differences were noted between users and non-users: 1) Users were more likely to think that the majority of their friends used belts. 2) Users were more likely to have parents who used belts. 3) Users were less likely to attach negative descriptions such as "nerd" to people who use belts.

Users and non-users were alike in their opinions about enforcement and the non-use of belts by police officers. In their view, stricter enforcement was not possible. They both preferred live testimony and pocketbook-based programs.

I. Promising Program Strategies

Compared to the younger children, the ninth and tenth graders endorsed far fewer program strategies. Brief comments about promising program strategies for this group are presented below.

- Of the three age groups, ninth and tenth graders represent the most difficult audience to reach through school-based programs. Assembly programs demonstrating the consequences of non-use seem to be the only acceptable option for school activities unless there is some way to obtain "big ticket" prizes.
- A school-related strategy is to examine driver's education materials to determine if there is an existing message about how to make buckling up "a house rule" for the new driver or permit holder.
- This group should be reached by ticketing parents.
- Two license-related strategies appear worth exploring: 1) Maintain pre-licensing records of students ticketed for not being buckled up -- they would face delays in obtaining learning permits. 2) Students with learner's permits who receive tickets for not being buckled up would face delays in obtaining their license.

VI. FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS WITH PARENTS

Four focus groups were conducted with parents of children between the post toddler and pre-driver ages. The vast majority of parents had several children of various ages, ranging from infants to driving age teenagers to adult children. These topics are covered for the groups with parents:

- Concern for children's safety
- Child safety seat/safety belt experience
- Attitudes about safety belts
- Influence of spouses and others
- Awareness of and attitudes about safety belt use law
- Program options
 - School curricula
 - School buses
 - Teams
 - Convincer
 - Pledge cards
 - School contests
 - Testimonials
 - Enforcement with and without tickets for unbuckled children
 - Police-sponsored contests
 - Safety belt salute
 - Parent/peer pressure programs
 - Belt use reminder signs
 - Insurance programs
- Preference for programs
- Comparison of users and non-users
- Promising program strategies

A. Concern for Children's Safety

Parents admitted that they are concerned about their children's safety in automobiles. They were also concerned about the driver, with some making their children buckle up "so they don't jump around" (in the car) and distract them. They were especially concerned when their children's friends were in the car. "You get really scared (when you see a car full of teenagers)," said one parent. Another said, "Nobody plans an accident."

Several parents talked about their concern for the safety of their children when riding in vehicles not equipped with safety belts. "We don't have belts in the van. Driving the van scares me. I hate it," said one mother.

Some parents expressed concern about the difference in safety between the front and rear seat. "(Children) are safer in the back," said one participant.

B. Child Safety Seat/Safety Belt Experience

Parents, especially non-users, talked about the days when cars did not have safety belts and when child safety seats were not required. Nearly every participant claimed to have used child safety seats, with all doing so since the law was passed. "Absolutely, they were always in a car seat," said one mother.

Descriptions of the transition from car seats to booster seats or safety belts varied. One parent told about his child's eagerness to give her car seat to a neighbor child and be "more grown up." Some parents reported that their children did not like the seats. They also said that children cannot see outside the car when they switch to a belt. There was little discussion of the details of how, when and why children switched from seats to belts, particularly the role adults played in the process.

Like the children represented in the groups, parents were inconsistent in their overall safety belt use. Very few users reported that they always buckle up or make their children buckle up. "Sometimes I cheat," said one participant. "The bigger they get, the more they stop buckling," said another parent.

Some parents said that their children will buckle up if asked. However, the parents admitted that they did not always remind the children. "I never think about it (asking the children to buckle up) for everyday driving," said one parent. "I let it slide sometimes," said another participant. One mother admitted that she lets her children unbuckle when she drives the car onto their residential street.

They often did not buckle up on short trips. Buckling up on long trips was considered more important because "it's more dangerous" on high-speed highways. Buckling up was also seen as more important in "bad weather." A third reason for buckling up was "seeing a police officer."

They discussed the problems of keeping children buckled up. One mother explained that when children are in the rear seat, the driver cannot always tell if the child unbuckles unless he "starts standing up and moving around." One parent's twins unbuckled each other. They mentioned the problem of having more children in the vehicle than belts or a vehicle (such as a van) without belts.

They believed that teenagers present problems because of their rebelliousness. "The younger ones do what you tell them to. The older ones are starting to think for themselves," said one participant.

C. Attitudes about Safety Belts

Parents generally believed that safety belts reduce injuries and save lives. There were some respondents in every group, however, who pointed out that using safety belts can have an adverse effect in the event of a crash.

Some participants admitted that they do not like belts. "I don't like it but I use it because it's the law," said one participant.

They indicated that safety belts are uncomfortable -- for adults and for children. Children were reported to complain about belts for a variety of reasons, including being confined. Two specific complaints were offered: "My stomach hurts." "It's too tight."

They believed that some children, particularly teenagers, do not buckle up because "it's not the cool thing to do." In a semi-serious vein, they suggested designer safety belts (because of teenagers' strong preference for designer labels).

D. Influence of Spouses and Others

Parents definitely believed that they are the strongest influence on the buckling up behavior of their children. Some parents had rules about buckling up and enforced those rules with their own and other children. "We need to instill the (buckling up) habit," said one parent. "If we don't, they don't," summed up another participant. A contrary opinion was offered by a parent who said, "I don't wear mine but I make the kids." "We don't enforce it. (Children) would buckle up if asked," explained one parent. Some parents reported that their children influence adults' behavior by reminding parents to buckle up.

Parental authority was viewed in a variety of ways: "A rule's a rule." "I'm the mother. That's why." This parental authority could be exercised outside the family. For example, one mother described her buckling up policy for all children: "I don't have to ask. Even the neighbor kids. They know it's the rule."

In many families, there were differences in the buckling up behavior of the adults. Often the mother was the parent who had the most consistent

buckling up behavior and who enforced the use of safety belts. Sometimes the father was the stronger influence.

They talked openly about the problems created by differences in safety belt use and how the children react. "Daddy, you're going to get killed if you don't wear your safety belt," one child was quoted as telling her father.

Reports were mixed about the role of grandparents. Some participants described grandparents that "never buckled up" while others had a positive influence on their grandchildren. Buckling up could be required by any adult, according to the parents. One example was the baby sitter.

Parents were concerned about their children's safety belt use in other vehicles: "You're not around them all the time." "I don't know what they did when they left me." "I imagine they wear their seat belts."

Parents believed that peer pressure is a factor in the use of safety belts by older children. They were not certain about how much influence peers have.

E. Awareness of and Attitudes about Safety Belt Use Law

Parents were aware of the law, if not always its specific provisions (for example, the amount of the fine and what age groups are covered). Some were aware of the specific age provisions of the law, and others were not. Illinois participants knew that the law is enforced as a secondary offense.

Most participants seemed to accept the law and see its safety benefits. In a few cases, parents considered the law a violation of "personal freedom." Although many considered the law "a good idea," the majority contended that the law is not enforced. Many said that they cite the law when requiring children to buckle up. Some admitted to trying to buckle up more often after the law was first passed.

Not one participant had received a ticket. However, one person was stopped and given a warning. "That day, yeah, we buckled right up," said the participant, indicating that the buckling up behavior did not persist.

Many started using their safety belts more often after the law was passed. "The law has made a difference," said one respondent. The law helped parents in making their children buckle up, because parents can say, "It's the law." "If I get stopped, I'll get a ticket, and you'll have to pay for the ticket," said one participant.

Participants generally believed that the law is not enforced. "I don't see it (being enforced) if it is," said one person. Another stated, "It's not enforced. It should be." Parents believed that greater enforcement of the child safety seat law is needed.

F. Program Options

Parents were similar to the children in their reactions to the program options. Compared to the children, adults tended to believe that parent-mediated programs and school-based programs have greater potential. "What really works is setting rules down right from the start," said one parent. "Setting an example," was suggested by another participant. They also tended to believe that more programs were appropriate for younger children, including preschoolers and kindergartners.

1. School Curricula

They believed that school is the appropriate place for information about safety belts to be presented. "A step in the right direction," said one participant. Other comments included: "It would help." "It wouldn't hurt." "(The use of safety belts) is one of those topics a school can help out on," said one participant. Although parents supported school-based programs as "good reinforcement," they contended that such programs "won't make (children) buckle."

Like some of the children, they could not imagine at first how safety belts could be discussed in math or art class. They wondered about the effectiveness of programs not directly involving being in a vehicle.

"The younger, the better" -- parents stressed the importance of starting the safety belt educational program as early as possible -- at least by first grade. "Everything the teacher says is law," said one mother about elementary school children. "Driver's ed is a real good place to push this," said one participant.

2. School Buses

This topic generated a lot of skeptical reactions, primarily because most school buses do not have safety belts. Parents generally believed that enforcing use on buses is not possible. "The kids are still walking around (inside the bus) when the driver takes off," observed one parent.

3. Teams

Some parents believed that children do not listen to their coaches and therefore would not heed a coach's advice about wearing safety belts. Other parents thought that the coach would be influential but would not help in developing a long-lasting buckling up habit. Some parents contended that the possibility of being kicked off the team for not using a safety belt might be an effective incentive.

4. Convincer

There was little awareness of this device. Like the students, parents thought children would see this device as "a ride" that would have little effect on safety belt use. They believed that schools must obtain parental permission for children to ride the device. Some mentioned problems of liability.

"It could be real good. It might make (children) think," said one parent. The device was viewed as "scary" and not appropriate for children under 5 years of age.

5. Pledge Cards

Exactly as found with the children, there was substantial skepticism about the effectiveness of pledge cards. Parents were simply not certain that such a program "would work." Some of their reasons were similar to those of the youngsters: People do not keep promises, monitoring is difficult, the effects "would wear off." The parents also talked about how the child would feel if the parent did not sign: "We didn't get the pizza because you didn't buckle."

Some parents thought that a pledge card program was "worth a try." "It's one of those topics a school can help out on but if it's not done at home, it won't work," suggested one participant.

In the discussion of pledge cards (and parent pressure programs), many parents talked openly about how their children have tried to get adults to stop smoking -- usually without success. Some parents believed that pledge cards would work with elementary school children. "I think there would be some value in this," said one participant. "My daughter would do anything for a pizza," said one parent. In the parents' view, pledge cards would definitely not work with teenagers.

6. School Contests

Parents believed that the program's effect would not be long-lasting. "When the pizza's gone, it's over," said one participant. "They would just do it for the pizza," said another parent. Similar words were echoed by other parents who said that the program would not have long-lasting effects.

Several parents objected to a program involving incentives. "That's bribing them into doing something they should be doing," said one parent. "We want children to buckle up for safety," said another parent.

7. Testimonials

Parents seemed to think that testimonial programs about the consequences of using or not using safety belts could be very effective, especially when the individual giving the testimony makes a personal appearance. The most effective testimonial would be made by "someone they knew" -- a peer. "Live testimony is more believable and has more impact," said one participant. "Show somebody with scars," suggested one father. "It's got to be visual," said another parent. Parents generally thought that both positive and negative examples of the consequences are appropriate for school programs.

Children were described as seeing videotapes "as staged." Parents preferred the in-person testimony because of the skepticism of the "video generation."

8. Enforcement with and without Tickets for Unbuckled Children

Parents rejected the concept of not giving tickets for unbuckled children. Users, in particular, believed that everybody should have to buckle up or face the consequences. More so than the students, parents believed that enforcement would prompt adults to make children buckle up.

"It's our place to impress upon our kids the importance of (buckling up)," said one parent. Parents seemed to think that if the law is enforced with adults, there would be an impact on children's buckling up behavior.

Some parents called the law "a good idea" but questioned whether the law is enforceable. Others thought that a majority of people would buckle up under strict enforcement. "If I knew that the law was going to be strictly enforced, I'd put (my belt) on," said one participant.

9. Police-sponsored Contests

Some parents saw a police-sponsored contest as "silly" and "far-fetched" -- the police have more important responsibilities. "The police don't have time for that," said one participant while another commented, "The Police Department has better things to do."

They also perceived that contests waste taxpayers' money because "(they) wouldn't work." "(Wearing safety belts) is not a game," commented one parent while another said, "You're supposed to buckle up for safety." Some also stated that police officers in squad cars cannot tell if children are using lap belts in the rear seat. A few joked about having to carry around their child's birth certificate to prove that he or she is not required to buckle up in the rear seat.

Some parents said that they buckle up anyway so the contest is just an opportunity for a "free prize," indicating that the event would probably not affect safety belt use. Several parents believed quite strongly that prizes should not be awarded for safety-related behavior.

One participant described a program where he was stopped and commended for being buckled up. He called the experience "scary" and conveyed the impression that being stopped would not be received positively by motorists.

10. Safety Belt Salute

The salute was viewed as not particularly effective, except perhaps with "little kids." "My 10-year-old would laugh," said one mother. "It's a game. The police should be enforcing the law," said another participant. However, some thought that people would buckle up "right then and there."

Like the children in the groups, many parents did not believe that police officers buckle up. For one parent, the salute could be "one trick to get officers buckled."

11. Parent/Peer Pressure Programs

A parent-based program was viewed favorably, if not enthusiastically. Parents were mixed about the effectiveness of pledge cards, with some parents mentioning the inability to quit smoking despite being "bugged" by their children. "I still smoke," said one parent. "It's not the school's concern. It undermines parental authority," said another parent. Others thought that "kids are good reminders" and "peer pressure works wonders."

"(Many parents) sign anything a child brings home just to get rid of it," said one participant. Another commented, "If I sign something, they hold me to it." "Through parents -- that's how you get kids buckled up," said one participant. "I'd really try but I know I'd fail him," said one parent. "I'd try my darnedest to remember for their sake," said another parent.

Again, these programs were viewed as more effective with younger children. With older children, students perceived as "cool" (pitchers and quarterbacks) should take active roles in safety belt programs would be effective.

12. Belt Use Reminder Signs

"This is pretty good," said one parent. Signs were seen as good reminders and should be "everywhere" -- intersections, toll booths, school parking lots, shopping malls. "Some people need reminders," said one participant.

13. Insurance Programs

Although an insurance program involving increased premiums for persons ticketed for non-use of safety belts was considered effective by students and parents, some adults had a strong negative reaction. They saw such a program as benefitting insurance companies and were opposed. "Why should insurance companies benefit?" asked one participant.

They suggested that an insurance program should be positively oriented -
- giving reductions in premiums to drivers who buckle up. Parents seemed more willing to buckle up if there is a reward associated with doing so.

G. Preference for Programs

Parents supported enforcement-related programs and programs using testimony about the consequences of using/not using safety belts. They favored "pocketbook" related programs. They emphasized the importance of "starting with the little ones" and seemed to think that programs oriented to teenagers are not as likely to be effective.

They recognized the safety benefits of belt use and generally accepted the law. However, they felt that the law is not enforced and particularly supported greater enforcement of the child safety seat law.

They generally supported school-based programs as reinforcement for parental action. Programs involving incentives were not viewed favorably.

H. Comparison of Users and Non-users

Users and non-users were very similar in terms of their attitudes about the role of parents in developing buckling up habits -- by setting an example and by requiring belt use. Even though non-users were more likely to be inconsistent in their own habits or in reminding their children, they still believed that parents can influence their children. Non-users were more likely to have stopped or reduced their enforcement of belt use.

I. Promising Program Strategies

Without question, adults were viewed as important in the process of teaching children to buckle up and reinforcing continued safety belt use. Two strategies important in helping parents do so are highlighted below.

- Parents need to be reinforced about the importance of their own safety belt behavior on the safety of their children (as related to the use of child safety seats and safety belts).
- Some parents need guidance about appropriate ways to enforce usage.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the qualitative research described in this report were intended to support these study objectives: 1) to identify strategies that have strong potential to increase the use of safety belts by youngsters; 2) to formulate recommendations for programs, procedures and materials to implement these strategies; and 3) to identify target audiences who could use these programs, procedures and materials, including parents, youngsters and traffic law enforcement personnel.

This chapter presents the recommendations for the programs, procedures and materials. The chapter concludes with a caveat about the qualitative analysis of the focus group findings.

A. Graphic Representation of Analysis

To facilitate the synthesis and understanding of the focus group results for the purpose of formulating recommendations, a qualitative analysis was performed. Strategies were evaluated in terms of their likely effectiveness with certain age groups.

A graphic representation of this qualitative analysis is shown in Exhibit 1. This chart shows the relative effectiveness of the program strategies in terms of participants' reactions and the analysts' interpretation of those reactions. A number of the expert panel members provided an assessment of effectiveness. As indicated in the exhibit, many of the programs were considered effective for younger children whereas few strategies appealed to the ninth and tenth graders.

EXHIBIT 1

"Assessments of Likely Effectiveness of Program Strategies"

<u>Program Strategy^b</u>	<u>Focus Group Findings</u>				<u>Experts^a</u>
	<u>Grades</u>				
	<u>3-4-5^c</u>	<u>6-7-8</u>	<u>9-10</u>	<u>Parents</u>	
School-based Programs					
Testimonials	ND	1	1	1	1-2
Discussion of safety belts in class	1	2	2	1	1-2
Pledge cards	ND	2	2	2	2
Contests	ND	2	2	2	2
Required belt use by team members	ND	3	3	2	2
Convincer demonstrations	ND	3	3	2	2
Enforcement Programs					
Tickets for adults	1 ^d	1 ^d	1	1	1
Tickets for children	1 ^d	1 ^d	1	1	1
Safety belt salute	1	3	3	3	2-3
Contests sponsored by police	ND	3	3	3	2
Parent/Peer Pressure Programs					
Pledge cards	2	2	3	3	2
Scripts	ND	2	ND	ND	2
Reminder Signs and Messages					
Reminder signs	1	2	2	1	2
Announcements at events	ND	ND	3	ND	2
Insurance and Other Penalties					
Premium increases	ND	1	1	3	1
Pre-driver's license penalties for driver's nonuse; also for passengers' nonuse	ND	ND	1	ND	1

Assessment Scale^e 1 = Ranked relatively effective
 2 = Ranked somewhat effective
 3 = Ranked not effective

ND = Not discussed
 See next page for notes a-e.

NOTES FOR EXHIBIT 1

- a. *Not all experts provided evaluations.*
- b. *Program strategies are presented in Section I. Background, Objectives, and Methodology. As noted in the exhibit's heading, they are listed here in the same order rather than rank order. Because of the attention span of the younger children, only 90-minute discussions were scheduled with third, fourth and fifth graders; not all program strategies were expected to be discussed in these groups. In some other groups as noted, time constraints prevented full discussion of all program strategies.*
- c. *The methodology used with third, fourth and fifth graders involved simple illustrations of general strategies, not more detailed written descriptions used in the other groups. Thus, certain specific activities such as Convincer demonstrations were not covered.*
- d. *Children in these grades have strong concerns about equity. They believe that enforcement should cover all ages.*
- e. *The assessment scale relates to the program strategies as presented in the groups and does not account for differences in participants' perceptions if program elements are changed or improved. For example, the pledge card program was viewed as ineffective by older students. Yet, if these students were involved in a teaching or monitoring role, they might well be more positive.*

B. Program Elements and Assumptions

The section that follows presents the series of recommended program strategies. These recommendations are based on the assumption that the implementation of all strategies would be preceded by a thorough program planning effort. This section discusses the planning and operating assumptions.

1. Planning Assumptions

The successful implementation of program strategies should follow the careful development of a comprehensive plan incorporating the elements highlighted below. (This discussion is not intended to be a full explanation

of the planning process but rather a prelude to the consideration of the recommendations.)

- Statement of Objectives -- The program planner must have a clear idea of what is to be accomplished (what problem is to be solved) so that appropriate implementation efforts can take place. The setting of specific objectives is also important in program evaluation. Is the objective to increase the use of belts by part-time users? For example, encouraging youngsters to buckle up on short trips? Is the objective to encourage non-users to buckle up? Is the objective to encourage parents to require their children to buckle up? Is the objective to encourage people to comply with a belt use law or to buckle up on a voluntary basis for safety reasons? A plan can have more than one objective.
- Target Audience -- The planner should specify the primary target audience. What group of people will receive the message and be expected to change their belt use behavior? More than one audience can be targeted; for example, parents and their elementary school children as well as the school personnel who will be administering the program.
- Message(s) -- The plan should stipulate what messages are to be delivered; for example, facts about the law or myths to be refuted.
- Program Materials -- The cost and effectiveness of any program are related to the type, quality and quantities of materials used. The plan should specify these materials. For example, a school-based program may require a teacher's guide, scripts for students to use in role-playing, pledge cards, badges for participants to wear, and other items.
- Schedule and Budget -- The schedule should allow time for planning, implementation and evaluation. The budget should be as complete as possible, including the cost of materials, personnel (such as patrol officers' overtime for a enforcement blitz), and incentives/rewards. Revenue sources should be specified as well.
- Incentives/Rewards -- Consideration must be given to desirability of using incentives and/or rewards and when. Some research has indicated that incentives and rewards can have a residual effect -- after the rewards are stopped, belt use declines but not below pre-campaign levels. Certainly, the focus group participants estimated that their response to any program would be related to their perceptions of the value of the prize and the likelihood of winning (in the case of a drawing).

- Delivery Agents/Sponsors/Support Groups -- Every program must be implemented by a responsible person or group. The planner must stipulate this responsibility. Sponsors may be required if the program depends on incentives/rewards. Finally, programs may require the support of certain individuals or organizations. For example, the PTA may be asked to help distribute materials to parents.
- Publicity/Promotion/Media Support -- Many programs depend on publicity, promotion and media support to ensure that the targeted audience gets information about the program. For example, the mass media are important in disseminating information about a forthcoming enforcement blitz and about its success. Promotion can consist of posters and signs, brochures, flyers, public service advertising, and other materials and activities.
- Evaluation -- The planner should build into the program some means for measuring the effectiveness of the program. Certainly, in the case of safety belt programs, the ideal evaluation would consist of observation of use, preferably before, during and after the program.

2. Operating Assumptions

There are a number of operating assumptions that must be made in developing and implementing any program. These assumptions are listed below.

1. Target audience selection should be based on this generalization:

Ninth and tenth graders are the most difficult to influence while third, fourth and fifth graders are more easily influenced. Parents are perceived as being important in encouraging/requiring belt use by children of all ages.

2. Program selection should be based on these generalizations:

Multiple programs offered over the course of a year are more effective because of the opportunity to reinforce the message.

Programs involving multiple message sources (school, community, peers, parents, grandparents and other adults) are more effective.

3. Program elements should be selected on the basis of age appropriateness and participant involvement. For example, coloring books are more age appropriate for the primary grades. Early childhood educators suggest that the coloring activity be accompanied by a cognitive activity such as "describe what happens next" or "circle all the objects starting with a certain letter." Comic books are appropriate for middle school and

even high school. Also important with regard to comic books, these materials have a high "passaround rate" -- in other words, they are shared often before being discarded.

4. Generally, an effective occupant protection program depends on these program elements: aggressive public information and education, enforcement and team efforts -- schools, enforcement agencies and other community groups working together on occupant protection.
5. The program plan or guide must be made available to the persons charged with conducting the program. For example, if the enforcement community is taking the lead, the program plan should be directed by the Police Department's designated coordinator. The guide must also be prepared with the user in mind.
6. Incentive programs have particular value in creating awareness and stimulating involvement. However, they are more difficult to put in place and institutionalize.
7. Funding must be viewed as primarily the community's responsibility. Federal resources are limited.
8. Strong support for belt use law enforcement is important. This support must come from the general public as well as judicial and law enforcement personnel. Surveys that document public support are helpful.

C. Recommended Strategies

Presented below are recommendations for five specific "high in priority" program strategies. These recommendations are not presented in any rank priority order although the first recommendation is the strongest one in terms of the views of focus group participants and expert panel members.

Also described are two complementary program elements (pledge cards and a factual brochure) that can be used with a variety of strategies. Each specific recommendation describes the program objective, target audience, administrators, participants, sponsors and materials. Administrators are defined as persons or institutions responsible for planning and directing the program. Participants are persons or institutions involved in implementing or presenting the program. Participants are not considered target audiences. Sponsors are persons or institutions contributing to the program. Although

many programs could benefit from monetary, in-kind or other contributions, in this sense sponsorship is limited to providing incentives or rewards such as pizzas or movie tickets. This definition of sponsorship does not preclude a program planner from asking for support from organizations for resources (such as the American Automobile Association for audiovisual materials or the state Child Passenger Safety Association for handouts).

Program Strategy #1 -- Testimonials*

- Objective:** To increase the target audience's belt use.
- Possible Components:** To demonstrate the consequences of using or not using safety belts by presenting testimonials showing live or videotape/slide reports by crash victims.
- Target Audience:** 6-12 grades, with priority for 9-12; also parents of children in those grades
- Administrators:** NHTSA and state agencies; school personnel or representatives of voluntary organizations (including the PTA and SADD)
- Participants:** Individuals from the target audiences who have been "saved by the belt" (or who have been orphaned or who have lost family members or who were seriously injured when not using a belt); with serious and visible injuries
- Sponsors:** For covering cost of production, reproduction and distribution of materials
- Materials:** Program guide, live or videotape or slide presentation, presenter's guide, handouts, publicity
- Special Concerns:** Participants who are considered peers (same age) of the target audience or slightly older are the most effective presenters of testimony. The most credibility exists with participants who are actual friends and classmates or who are seen in person. There is a need to be sensitive in portraying disabled people.
- Also, there is a need to convince schools to incorporate testimonials on an ongoing basis.
- Other Strategies and Activities:** Pledge card program, reminder signs (fund-raising or commemorative activity), articles in school newspapers, comic books, PSAs, school competitions.

* Testimonials can be part of any comprehensive occupant protection program.

Program Strategy #2 -- Belt Law Enforcement

Objective: To achieve higher compliance rates with state belt use laws by youth and/or their drivers.

Possible Components: There are several variations for an occupant protection enforcement program, based on whose buckling up behavior is addressed -- drivers or adults with child passengers. Drivers can be ticketed for not having child passengers properly buckled up. Or, drivers themselves can be ticketed for not buckling up. Another variation concerns the type of enforcement. In states where belt law enforcement for post-toddler youth is a primary offense, enforcement emphasis can be placed on ticketing drivers of vehicles where children are visibly unrestrained (standing in the seat, for example). Enforcement should be part of routine, not special, efforts, and must be accompanied by public information and education (PI&E) activities to make people aware that enforcement is active.

Target Audience: All children and drivers of youngsters

Administrators: School personnel and/or parents, enforcement personnel

Participants: Enforcement community

Sponsors: Police department for training time; other sponsors for covering costs of materials

Materials: Program guide, handouts (such as McGruff coloring book), posters, publicity about enforcement

Special Concerns: This strategy requires police training. A policy that patrol officers should set a public example and use belts is desirable.

Other Strategies: Pledge card program, public information and education, testimonials (by police officers themselves and with police officers as slide/videotape show presenters)

Program Elements

1. Provide police personnel who visit schools with information and materials about safety belt laws and youngsters.
2. Before and during the enforcement campaign, conduct special enforcement and belt use education programs in community and in schools.

Program Strategy #3 -- Penalties for New Drivers

- Objective:** To develop belt use among children approaching driving age, holders of learner's permits, and new drivers with provisional (limited) licenses.
- Possible Components:** All learner's permit holders and their younger passengers (siblings and friends) who are required to buckle up in compliance with state belt laws. All new drivers will have provisional license restrictions extended if found in violation of belt use law.)
- Target Audience:** 9-12 grades, with 10-12 as high priority, plus younger passengers of new drivers
- Administrators:** State motor vehicle departments
- Participants:** Examiners from state motor vehicle departments, driver's education teachers, enforcement community, parents
- Sponsors:** State motor vehicle departments
- Materials:** Program guide, notification to all permit holders and new drivers, publicity campaign, handouts for driver's education classes, DMV manual for all new drivers, displays at motor vehicle departments.
- Special Concerns:** This strategy requires 1) the involvement of the state motor vehicle department to establish administrative procedures for collecting data, 2) effective police enforcement and 3) publicity.
- Although the principal publication for delivery of the message about this strategy is the DMV manual, driver's education classes may not provide the necessary reinforcement. In many public school districts, funds for such classes are limited. Fewer students can take the class. The classes may be restricted to 11th and 12th graders.
- Private high schools as well as commercial driving schools should be targeted to expand the program's reach.
- Other Strategies:** Enforcement, pledge card program
- Note:** In some jurisdictions, before teenagers can receive learner's permits, they must appear with their parents in a juvenile judge setting and participate in an occupant protection and alcohol program. Testimonials and other safety belt public information and education activities can be incorporated into these programs.

Alternate:

If pre-drivers are cited for belt non-use, their permit and/or their eligibility for school driver education class could be delayed based on police notification of the public school system and private educational institutions. (One drawback to the latter strategy is that driver's education is an important channel for delivery of messages about traffic safety.)

Program Strategy #4 -- Informing Adult Drivers of Need for Children to Use Safety Restraints and Belts

- Objective: To persuade adults to use belts full-time and play a stronger role in encouraging children's belt use in compliance with state law.
- Possible Components: Parents need suggestions and guidance for dealing with recalcitrant young passengers. Address myths and questions of adult non-users. Follow example set by materials for parents to help children say no to drugs, develop occupant protection "tips for parents" brochure. Distribute through adult organizations. Make available at child-related places such as preschools and grocery stores.
- Parents need to institute belt use polices, reinforce belt use behavior, and set example.
- Policies, recommendations and materials addressing the "more kids than belts" situation should be developed. Materials can be distributed through youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts.
- Target Audience: Adults -- parents and other family members, carpool drivers, youth activity directors; pediatricians, orthodontists and other health care professionals serving young people
- Administrators: Voluntary organizations, schools
- Participants: Children, parents
- Sponsors: Institutions to cover the costs of materials
- Materials: Program guide, testimonials from parents of dead or injured children, printed materials, including occupant protection "tips for parents" brochure
- Special Concerns: Adults who encourage belt use need reinforcement to promote full-time use. Other adults need information on the benefits of belt use for people of all ages.
- Other Strategies: Enforcement, testimonials, pledge card program

Program Strategy #5 -- Reminder Signs and Messages

- Objective:** To provide visible reminders for buckling up everyone by involving children in fund-raising, designing and placing belt use reminder signs and/or logotypes.
- Possible Components:** Signs serve as reminders and reinforcement for belt users. By getting nonbelt users involved in raising money, designing and/or placing signs, they increase their commitment to using belts.
- Design contests are appropriate. Sign-making with stencils, silk-screening or other methods can become a school activity.
- Suggest program activity for youth organizations such as Boy Scouts.
- Target Audience:** K-12, all occupants
- Administrators:** School personnel, voluntary organizations, individuals, highway/street departments, parking garages
- Participants:** Youngsters, art judges, signmakers, installers
- Sponsors:** Local merchants, highway/street departments
- Materials:** Program guide, handouts, event(s), publicity, signs, contest rewards
- Special Concerns:** Reminder materials will cost money to make, distribute, install, maintain and replace. Signs need to be changed regularly to make sure people do not ignore.

Complementary Program Component -- Pledge Cards

Note: This program element can be used effectively with many of the "high priority" programs.

- Objective: To increase belt use by involving members of the target audience of non-users and part-time users, and to obtain their commitment to use belts.
- Possible Components: Develop pledge card kit (with sample cards, talking points, guidelines).
Identify sponsors for prizes.
Conduct at least two- to four-week pledge program, longer if possible.
Train junior and senior high school students to monitor safety belt use among younger grades. Have a three-year age difference between monitors and target audience.
- Target Audience: K-10, older family members
- Administrators: School personnel, voluntary organizations
- Participants: School personnel, students, adults, siblings
- Sponsors: (Local) businesses
- Materials: Program guide, pledge cards, fact sheets and other handouts, publicity, incentives/rewards (optional)
- Special Concerns: Children believe that people may not keep a promise. Program must include some means to measure compliance and report results objectively and persuasively.
Incentives/rewards with some monetary value can be viewed as optional. However, some type of recognition is essential such as certificates or buttons or a public announcement/recognition.
Children in the upper grades and non-user parents may be more likely to be motivated by "big ticket" prizes which may be difficult to obtain initially and on an ongoing basis. Without prizes, a pledge card program may not have a significant impact unless other attitude/behavior-changing elements such as discussions are included.

Complementary Program Component -- More Facts on Belts

Note: This program component can be used effectively with a number of the "high priority" program strategies.

- Objective: To counter some of the improper practices, negative attitudes related to "loopholes" in safety belt use laws, and residual "myths" about belt use.
- Target Audience: Parents and youth
- Administrators: NHTSA, states
- Participants: States, organizations disseminating materials
- Sponsors: As recruited to subsidize printing and distribution
- Materials: Program guide, fact sheets, publicity
- Special Concerns: Copy must be persuasive and appropriate for the targeted audience, especially about remaining myths of being trapped in a crash, burning, drowning, etc. Obtaining proper clearance for a pragmatic message may be difficult. (For example, advising drivers on how to buckle up three children using two belts may not be within agency guidelines.)

The various state laws appear to have been self-defeating in terms of some people's belt use. For example, the focus groups revealed that children sometimes wonder what to do when there are more people than belts. Some focus group participants indicated that children are very aware of the age limits for requiring belt use by rear-seat passengers and look forward to being exempt from buckling up. Information should be developed to address these issues.

In sum, the study generated key findings for occupant protection planners to use in assessing the needs of targeted age groups and in selecting the appropriate combination of program strategies outlined in the balance of this section. Important to note is that there is no one winning combination: Programs should be tailored to the particular age group, based on the community's resources and traffic safety situation. In this way, increased use of safety belts by youngsters becomes an accomplishable goal.

APPENDIX A -- PANEL OF EXPERTS AND CONSULTANT

A panel of experts provided advice and consultation on the study design, focus group materials, program strategies and the draft final report. The panel members are listed below along with a brief description of their experience relative to the project. Also listed is the technical advisor to the project, a consulting child psychologist.

Jill Berington
Contract Officer
Ohio Department of Highway Safety
Columbus, OH

Ms. Berington supervises occupant protection activities for the Office of the Governor's Highway Safety Representative. She designed, developed and implemented a program that involved 170 hospitals in a statewide child passenger safety program. She was responsible for the research and development of highway safety curriculum for the Ohio Traffic Safety Research Center and taught driver education in high school.

Karen M. Forcade
President, Youth Research
President, Consumer Sciences, Inc.
Brookfield, CT

Ms. Forcade is the founder of Consumer Sciences, Inc., a consumer research company and Youth Research, a four-year-old consumer research organization specializing in innovative design and formulation of research studies involving children. She is a child psychologist.

E. Scott Geller
Professor
Department of Psychology
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
State University
Blacksburg, VA

Dr. Geller's research and teaching interests include behavioral community interventions in transportation safety. One ongoing, three-year project sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control is studying children's belt use behavior following several activities. He has conducted numerous applied psychology research projects, given more than 250 professional presentations and published more than 125 articles in research journals.

Andrew Greenfield
The Greenfield Consulting Group
New York, NY

Mr. Greenfield has conducted extensive research with children, including studies involving highway safety. He began his career at Weiss and Geller Advertising as Director of Research Services. He had marketing and research responsibilities at several firms before starting his own company.

John L. Harvey
Office of Driver and Safety Education
Department of Education
Montpelier, VT

Mr. Harvey supervises a statewide program of driver and traffic safety education for all public and private schools, develops and teaches traffic safety education courses at the university level, and develops and implements the occupant restraint and alcohol traffic safety components of the Governor's Highway Safety plan. He has a master's degree in safety and has taught driver education courses for high school as well as university students.

Kathleen A. Hicks
Program Manager
Washington Traffic Safety Commission
Tacoma, WA

Ms. Hicks is responsible for developing curriculum for health personnel, community education and early childhood education in automobile safety. A registered nurse, she presents workshops, conferences and education classes.

Laura G. Schwartz
Past President
National Coalition for Seat Belts on School Buses
Skokie, IL

As president of the coalition, Ms. Schwartz produced a program of published materials, legislative initiatives, and other efforts to increase belt use by school children. She is a member of the teaching staff at North Shore School. She also serves as a technical translator for Hirsh Company and an evaluator of standardized achievement tests for Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich.

Stephanie Merton Tombrello
Executive Director
Los Angeles Area Child Passenger Safety Association
Altadena, CA

Ms. Tombrello has given numerous presentations and written articles on transportation safety for infants and children. She has worked extensively with schools and communities on youth and child safety programs. She is a licensed clinical social worker and maintains a private practice of clinical social work.

Lorrie Walker
American Academy of Pediatrics
Pennsylvania Chapter
Ardmore, PA

Ms. Walker is the trainer for the chapter's Child Passenger Safety Project and is responsible for providing information, materials and training for many professional, educational and community groups in the state. Her previous experience includes health education.

Susan Toler, Ph.D (Consultant to the project)
Annapolis, MD

Dr. Toler is a licensed clinical psychologist who served as a consultant on child development to the project. She maintains a full-time clinical practice for young children and adolescents. Dr. Toler serves on the Anne Arundel County Children and Youth Committee.

APPENDIX B -- FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

FIRST ROUND: SAFETY BELT USERS

May 4-6, 1988 Homewood (Chicago), Illinois

May 4: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders
 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Parents

May 5: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Graders
 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Ninth and Tenth Graders

May 11-12, 1988 Hamburg (Buffalo), NY

May 11: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders
 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Ninth and Tenth Graders

May 12: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Graders
 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Parents

SECOND ROUND: SAFETY BELT NON-USERS

May 25-26, 1988 Hamburg

May 25: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders
 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Parents

May 26: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Graders
 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Ninth and Tenth Graders

June 1-3, 1988 Homewood

June 1: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders
 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Ninth and Tenth Graders

June 2: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Graders
 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Parents

APPENDIX C

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SCREENERS

Each field service that recruits groups for this project will receive a letter explaining some of the details of the screening questionnaire. Field services typically use experienced interviewers to recruit focus groups. As a consequence of this, very detailed instructions and introductory scripts which are read verbatim are unnecessary. Most recruiters already know the basics of conducting an interview over the telephone.

Most field services have lists of persons on file for use in focus group discussions. We feel that calling parents in the file to recruit their children would be a most efficient way to fill the children's groups. There would be no problem of having to establish credibility, and less of a problem with respondents being hurt or angered if the screening interview excluded them or their children from a group. Below are explanations similar to those that will be sent to field services. It should help you to evaluate the screeners, and the objectives behind individual questions.

Frequently throughout both screeners you will see instructions to "terminate" an interview. This simply means that the potential focus group participant does not meet one of the specifications for inclusion in a focus group. Special care is always taken to insure that the rejected individual does not feel angry or hurt by his or her exclusion from this group. They are reassured that their opinions are important, but that the group already has a number of individuals like them in it, and that the recruiter is striving to get a good balance of many different types of people in the group. If the question which disqualifies a respondent is sensitive (ie: race) recruiters will be asked to continue to a less sensitive question, and terminate there.

Children's Questionnaire

Introduction

Please note that the younger children (Grades 3, 4, and 5) will be limited to focus groups that only last an hour. It is assumed that a longer group would tax their attention spans. Also note that we will be taking only one participant per household.

Questions 1 and 2: Screening For The Parent(s) Who Drives The Child

We will be asking adults about the behavior of their children regarding safety belt usage. These questions simply assure that we are talking to someone qualified to answer.

Question 3: Screening For A Variety Of Driving Relationships

It is assumed that the relationship a child has with the adults who drive him or her may have an impact on safety belt usage. For example, grandparents may be less insistent on belt usage than parents. We would like to round out the groups to include as many of these situations as possible. A possible quota to cover this variable could be (for a group of 8)

- a. 2-3 from single parent households
(one regular driver)
- b. 5-6 from dual parent or multiple driver households
(perhaps including grandparent, uncle, etc.)

Question 4: Screening For Children From Different Sized Families

As with question 3, this question insures that children of a variety of ages and family situations will be in each group. It is assumed that families with a number of children may differ from single child families in how they handle

child safety belt usage. In extreme cases, there may be more children than belts, so usage may be de-emphasized. A possible quota for a group of 8 could be:

- a. 6 children with at least one sibling between third and tenth grade
- b. 2 children with no siblings between third and tenth grade

We may also try to insure that at least half of the children with siblings have at least one older sibling, so they might discuss what was done by parents in other instances. Proposed age and sex quotas are as follows:

- One group of young "users" and one group of young "non-users" in each of the three categories.
- Recruit two participants over the ideal group sizes specified below. Oversample should be of children least likely to show, (e.g.: boys, very young, etc.) Based upon the experience of each recruiting organization.

Category I: group of eight children in grades 3, 4, and 5:

	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>
Third graders	1	2
Fourth graders	1	1
Fifth graders	2	1

Category II: group of eight children in grades 6, 7, and 8:

	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>
Sixth graders	1	2
Seventh graders	1	1
Eighth graders	2	1

Category III: group of ten children in grades 9 and 10:

	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>
Ninth graders	2	3
Tenth graders	3	2

Question 5: Screening Against Past Focus Group Participation

This question insures we get no youthful focus group "veterans" who might have any preconceived notions of how they should respond in a focus group setting. This is of more concern for the adult groups.

Question 6: Screening Against Children From Households Including Adults In "Sensitive" Occupations

This question removes children from households which may be atypical in their attitudes toward safety belts or communications. For instance, children of policemen or truck drivers may have an introduction to seat belts which differs in some way from the "average" experience. The same kind of logic applies to excluding children of people who work in advertising or the media; they may react differently to persuasive appeals than the norm. Finally, children of market researchers and pollsters are omitted because they may feel themselves to be "experts" at being interviewed, or have a preconceived notion about what is expected of them.

Question 7: Screening For Variety in Parent's Ages

This question simply insures that we get parents in a range of ages, assuming that age of parent may have an impact on how they introduce their children to seat belts. A possible quota to cover this variable could be a third in each age category.

Question 8: Screening For Variety In Socio-Economic Background

This question insures that we obtain children from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, on the assumption that this has an impact ultimately on children's safety belt wearing behavior. A possible quota could be half from "white collar" and half from "blue collar" households.

Question 9: Screening For Variety In Parent's Educational Backgrounds

Same rationale as question 8. A possible quota to cover this variable could be participants from a household in each category with perhaps 1 extra from categories B, C, and D.

Question 10: Screening For Variety In Socio-Economic Background

Same rationale as question 8. A possible quota to cover this variable could be 2 children from each category.

Question 11: Screening For Ethnic Representativeness

We feel the groups should be representative racially of the test site. Quotas would be established when test sites are finalized.

Question 12: Screening For Adult/Older Child Seat Belt Usage

That question does double duty. It is assumed that older children (grades 6 through 10) are more likely to understand a question about their safety belt usage than younger children, and more likely to provide an accurate report of that behavior than their parents. Hence, they will be asked directly. In the case of younger children, questions about safety belt usage will go through the parents. Question 12 is a "warm up" question to prepare the parent for asking question 13.

Question 13: Screening For Younger Child Seat Belt Usage By Asking Parents

This question seeks accurate answers about children's safety belt usage by removing the stigma often associated with non-usage.

Adult (Parents) Questionnaire

For each group of parents, we will try to obtain more mothers than fathers, on the assumption that mothers tend to be in the car with children more often than fathers. A possible quota could be six mothers and four fathers per group. Naturally, the sex of each participant would be simply "observed," and not asked!

Questions 1 and 2: Screening For The Parent(s) Who Drive The Child

These questions insure that we are speaking to a parent who is aware of his or her children's behavior in the car. To get perspectives on different ages and perhaps different children's temperments, we are only taking parents of two or more children.

Question 3: Screening For a Variety Of Driving Relationships

Same rationale for a group of 10 as in question 3 in children's questionnaire. A possible quota could be :

- a. 2-3 single parents, and
- b. 7-8 from dual parent or multiple driver households.

Question 4: Screening For Parents With Different Sized Families

We have extended the grades of qualifying children, to include grades K through 2. We are also assuming that family size may have an impact on how parents deal with their children on this issue. Possible quotas could be 7 participants with 2 to 3 children, 3 participants with 4 or more children. Also, the group should be composed of parents of children in every grade from K to 10.

Questions 5 and 6: Screening Against Parents With Past Focus Group Participation And "Sensitive" Occupations

Same rationale as questions 6 and 5 in the children's questionnaire.

Question 7: Screening For Parent Seat Belt Usage

This question (same as question 12 in the children's screener) seeks to differentiate parents who usually do use safety belts from those who usually don't. This is facilitated by removing some of the onus of non-use, and by eliminating potential participants who report part-time usage of safety belts. The assumption here is that those who over-report casual safety belt usage will not say "all of the time," and that there is little reason to doubt a respondent who reports total or frequent non-usage.

Question 8: Screening For Variety In Parent's Ages

Same basic rationale as question 7 in the children's screener. A possible quota could be 4 participants aged 26 to 35 with 3 each in the other age categories.

Question 9: Screening For Variety In Parent's Socio-Economic Background

Same basic rationale as question 8 in the children's screener, only securing parents instead of children. A possible quota could be 5 from "white collar" households and 5 from "blue collar" households.

Question 10: Screening For Ethnic Representativeness

Same basic rationale as question 11 in the children's screener, only securing parents instead of children. Quotas would be established when test sites are finalized.

Question 11: Screening For Variety In Parent's Socio-Economic Background

Same basic rationale and proposed quota ratios as question 10 in the children's screener, only securing parents instead of children. A possible quota to cover this variable could be 2 participants per group from categories A and B, and 3 participants per group from categories C and D.

Question 12: Screening For Variety In Parent's Educational Background

Same basic rationale and proposed quota ratios as question 11 in the children's screener, only securing parents instead of adults. A possible quota to cover this variable could be 1 from each of categories A and B, 3 from each of categories C and D, and 2 from category E.

APPENDIX D -- SCREENERS

NAME:
ADDRESS:
PHONE:

DRAFT SCREENER: CHILDREN

Hello, my name is _____ with (research co.)
We are currently conducting a study with children about traffic safety. The study is taking the form of group discussions, that will last between an hour and a half to two hours for older children, and about an hour for the younger children. We will be offering refreshments and (\$ amount) to group participants. The groups will take place at our offices on (dates) at (times). Do you think one of your children might be interested in coming to a group?

(Only one participant per household)

May I ask a few quick questions?

1. Are you the parent or step-parent of any children, between third and tenth grade living with you at home?

Yes _____

No _____ (Ask to speak to a parent in the household. If no parent available, thank and terminate.)

2. Do you drive your child/children in a car frequently?

Yes _____

No _____ (Ask to speak to parent who does drive child. If parent not available, thank and terminate.)

3. Are there any other persons in the household who regularly drive the children?

No _____

Yes _____

(specify relationship) _____

(check quotas)

4. Could you please tell me the grade and sex of each child?

<u>GRADE</u>		<u>SEX</u>
K	_____	_____
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
6	_____	_____
7	_____	_____
8	_____	_____
9	_____	_____
10	_____	_____

participating children
from grades 3 to 10 only

(Check number of siblings K to grade 10/grade of sibling/grade of potential participant/sex quotas, and inquire about availability of selected child/children. Recruit only one child per household. If no children are available for the group, and two or more appropriate children are in the household, screen the parent with the appropriate questionnaire.)

5. Has (selected child/children) ever been in a group discussion of a product or service before?

Yes _____

(Go to 5A and 5B)

No _____

A. What was the topic(s)?

(If traffic safety related, thank and terminate)

B. How long ago was the last discussion?

(If less than one year, thank and terminate)

6. Do you or anyone else in the household work in any of the following fields?

- A. Professional driving, such as being a truck or taxi driver
- B. Law enforcement or administration or traffic safety
- C. Market research, public opinion survey research, or public opinion polling
- D. Advertising
- E. T.V., radio, newspapers

(If "yes" to any of the above, thank and terminate)

7. Which of the following categories includes your age?

- A. 25 or less _____
- B. 26 to 35 _____ (Check quotas)
- C. 36 or more _____

8. A. What is your occupation?

B. What are the occupations of the other adults in the household?

A) _____

(check quotas) B) _____

9. How much formal education have you completed?

(Read categories and record below)

- A. High school grad, or less _____
- B. Technical school or junior college grad _____ (Check quotas)
- C. Some work on four year college degree _____
- D. Four year college grad _____
- E. Graduate school training _____

10. Which of the following categories includes your total household income?

(Read categories and record below)

- A. Less than \$15,000 _____
- B. 15,000 to 25,000 _____
- C. 25,000 to 35,000 _____ (Check quotas)
- D. 35,000 + _____

11. To which ethnic or racial group do you consider yourself a member?

- A. White _____
- B. Black _____
- C. Hispanic _____ (Check quotas)
- D. Asian _____
- E. Other _____

(If child selected in question 4 is in grades 3 through 5, ask the parent questions 12 and 13. If selected child is in grades 6 through 10, ask permission to speak with the child directly, and ask him/her question 12 only. Preface question by telling child what the study is about, and how important his/her participation is to the study. Ask about child's interest and availability if they can qualify for the group.)

12. People differ in their use of seat belts in cars. Some use them all the time, others only for longer trips, or for highway driving. Many do not wear them at all.

How often would you say you usually wear your seat belt while travelling in a car...

(Read categories with letter designations, so respondent can call out letter in response)

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|-------|------------------------------------|
| A. | All of the time | _____ | (If child, assign to "user group") |
| B. | Most of the time | _____ | |
| C. | Some of the time | _____ | (If child, thank and terminate) |
| D. | Seldom | _____ | (If child, assign to |
| E. | Never | _____ | "non-user" group) |

13. Many children between the ages of 5 and 15 do not wear seat belts while travelling in a car. On the average, how often would you say (selected child) uses seat belts while travelling with you in the car:

(Read categories and letter designations)

- A. All of the time ("user" group)
- B. Most of the time
- C. Some of the time (terminate)
- D. Seldom ("Non-user" group)
- E. Never

Invite to group. Stress how important their opinions are to the study, and that they should let us know as soon as possible if they must cancel.

NAME: (Of Child)
(Of Parent)

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

NAME:
ADDRESS:
PHONE:

DRAFT SCREENER: PARENTS

Hello, my name is _____ with (research co.)
We are currently conducting a study involving parents about children's traffic safety. This study is taking the form of group discussion, that will last between an hour and a half to two hours. We will be offering refreshments, and (\$ amount) to group participants. The group will take place at our offices on (date) at (time). Do you think you or another parent in the household might be interested in coming to a group?

(Check quotas on sex)

(Only one participant per household)

May I ask a few quick questions?

1. Are you the parent of two or more children and stepchildren between Kindergarten and tenth grade, living with you at home?

Yes _____

No _____

(Ask to speak to a parent in the household who has such children there. If no such parent available, thank and terminate.)

2. Do you drive your children in a car frequently?

Yes _____

No _____

(Ask to speak to parent who does drive child. If parent not available, thank and terminate.)

3. Are there any other persons in the household who regularly drive the children?

No _____

Yes _____

(specify relationship) _____

(check quotas)

4. Could you please tell me the grade and sex of each child?

GRADE

SEX

K _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

(Check quotas on family size/grades of children/sex)

5. Have you ever been in a group discussion for a marketing or opinion research company before?

Yes _____ (Go to 5A and 5B)

No _____

A. What was the topic?

(If traffic safety related, thank and terminate)

B. How long ago was it?

(If less than one year, thank and terminate)

6. Do you or anyone else in the household work in any of the following fields?

- A. Professional driving, such as being a truck or taxi driver
- B. Law enforcement or administration or traffic safety
- C. Marketing research, or public opinion polling
- D. Advertising
- E. T.V., radio, newspapers

(If "yes" to any of the above, thank and terminate)

7. People vary in their use of seat belts in cars. Some use them all the time, others use them only for longer trips or for highway driving. Many do not wear them at all.

How about you? How often would you say you usually wear your seat belt while driving a car...

(Read categories with letter designations, so respondent can call out letter in response)

- A. All of the time ("user" group)
- B. Most of the time
- C. Some of the time (thank and terminate)
- D. Seldom
- E. Never ("non-user" group)

8. Which of the following categories includes your age?

- A. 25 or less _____
- B. 26 to 35 _____ (Check quotas)
- C. 36 or more _____

9. A. What is your occupation?
 B. What are the occupations of other adults in the household?

(check quotas) A) _____
 B) _____

10. To which ethnic or racial group do you consider yourself a member?

A. White _____
 B. Black _____
 C. Hispanic _____ (Check quotas)
 D. Asian _____
 E. Other _____

11. Which of the following categories includes your total household income?

(Read categories and record below)

A. Less than \$15,000 _____
 B. 15,000 to 25,000 _____
 C. 25,000 to 35,000 _____ (Check quotas)
 D. 35,000 + _____

12. How much formal education have you completed?

(Read categories and record below)

A. High school grad, or less _____
 B. Technical school or junior college grad _____ (Check quotas)
 C. Some work on four year college degree _____
 D. Four year college grad _____
 E. Graduate school training _____

Invite to group. Stress how important their participation is to the study, and that they should let us know as soon as possible if they must cancel.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

APPENDIX E -- MODERATOR GUIDES

CHILDREN'S MODERATOR GUIDE

(5) I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Moderator introduction
- B. Topic and purpose of discussion (highway safety; one and a half hours)
- C. Audio taping/observers (confidentiality)
- D. Ground rules (one at a time; informal; speak freely; no right/wrong answers -- we are interested in learning about your opinions and what you do every day; we need and appreciate your input)
- E. Participant introduction (first name, grade, whether you have brothers and/or sisters and what ages they are)

(10) II. GENERAL DISCUSSION ABOUT PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION

- A. How many times a week (seven days) do you ride in a car? (show of hands)
- B. Who usually drives you? (mother, father, teacher, other)
- C. What type of car do you ride in most often? (sedan, station wagon, sports car, van, truck, etc.) What other cars do you ride in during the week?
- D. Do you ride in the front or back seat most of the time?

(5) III. CHILD SAFETY SEATS

- A. Do you remember using a child safety seat as a very young child (between ages of one and three)? (Child safety seat is specially constructed seat for young children -- seat is buckled to car with safety belt; child is buckled into seat.)
- B. What happened when you stopped using the seat? (switch to safety belt only or belt with booster seat or nothing)
- C. How old were you when you stopped using the child safety seat?

(10) IV. CURRENT SAFETY BELT USAGE

- A. Do you ever ride unbuckled? (Please describe) Have you ever waved to someone in the car behind? Have you ever stood up on the seat? Have you ever ridden in the back of a station wagon and not used a safety belt?
- B. How often do you wear the safety belt when you're in the car? (show of hands: always, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, never)
- C. Do you wear your safety belt on some trips but not for others? For what kinds of trips do you wear your belt? (length of trip, who is driving, who else is in the car, time of day, weather conditions) Do you ever unbuckle during a trip? Why? How often?
- D. Do you put your belt on more often in the front seat or the back seat? Why? Do you ever ride without a belt in the rear part of a station wagon or a van -- without a belt?
- E. Do you put your belt on more often when you are in the car with certain people? Who do you wear a belt with most? Why?
- F. Why do you use safety belts?
- G. Why do you think other kids don't always wear belts?
- H. (Optional) What happens in a carpool situation, for example, when there are more kids than safety belts?

(10) V. SAFETY BELT HISTORY

- A. How old were you when you first started using safety belts? Did you ever use a booster seat? When were you first able to buckle up without any help?
- B. What/who made you start using safety belts? (parent, grandparent, teacher, pediatrician, other)
- C. Did anyone show you how to use a safety belt? Who?
- D. Does anyone make sure that you are buckled up? Who? What do they do? Do you buckle up for some people and not others? Who?
- E. Do you buckle up automatically or do you wait until you are reminded?
- F. Do your younger/older brothers and/or sisters wear safety belts? Why? Why not? What about your friends? Why? Why not? What about kids younger than you? Older than you?
- G. What do your parents do about getting your brothers and/or sisters and friends to buckle up? Does it work? Why not?
- H. Do you notice if adults in the car buckle up? Other children? Do you ask them to buckle up? What do you say?
- I. How do you feel when other children (siblings and friends) and your parents do/do not buckle up?

(5) VI. SAFETY BELT LAWS

- A. Is there a law requiring adults to wear safety belts?
Children?
- B. What is the age limit in the front seat? In the back seat?
- C. What happens if you do not wear your belt? (child, parent, driver)
- D. Do you think the law is a good idea or a bad idea? Why?
- E. Did you start buckling up because of the law?

(40) VII. REACTIONS TO PROGRAM OPTIONS

(All groups will have several different program options explained to them in order to obtain their reactions. In the groups with third, fourth and fifth graders, the moderator will distribute and read simple descriptions of options and ask the children to pretend that they are currently in the program. The same approach may be used with the sixth, seventh and eighth graders. The older children and parents will be given descriptions to read silently. In round with users, participants will be told about the importance of their "expert" advice in helping to get everybody to buckle up. Participants will be asked to remember their own parent/child buckling up experience.)

- A. What is your overall reaction to this option?
- B. Do you think this program would be effective? Why? Why not?
- C. If a friend who does not wear a seat belt all the time participated in this program, what do you think he or she would say about the program? Do you think the program would increase their use of safety belts? Why? Why not? If so, how?
- D. Would the program change your use of safety belts? Why? Why not? If so, how?
- E. How would you change this program so that more kids buckle up?

(5) VIII. SUMMARY

- A. (Read titles) Which program did you like the most? The least? Why?
- B. Which program do you think would work the most effective in getting kids to wear belts? Not at all effective? Why?
- C. How would you get kids your age to use safety belts? Younger kids? Older kids?

(5) IX. CONCLUSION

- A. Summary of comments
- B. Any questions
- C. Return to area in early June to talk with non-users -- any advice.
- D. Thank you

PARENTS MODERATOR'S GUIDE

(5) I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Moderator introduction
- B. Topic and purpose of discussion (research concerning highway safety; one and a half to two hours)
- C. Audio taping/observers (confidentiality)
- D. Ground rules (one at a time; informal; speak freely; no right/wrong answers -- we are interested in learning about your opinions and what you do every day; we need and appreciate your honest input)
- E. Participant introduction (first name, number and ages of children living at home)

(10) II. GENERAL DISCUSSION

- A. How often do you drive your children in the car?
- B. When and where do you typically drive them? (school, sports, store, etc.)
- C. What types of vehicles do you drive them in? (sedan, station wagon, sports car, truck, van)
- D. Do other people drive your children on a regular basis? (spouse, sibling, grandparent, other relative, friend, babysitter, etc.) When and where do they drive them? What types of vehicles do they drive your children in? (sedan, station wagon, sports car, truck, van)
- E. Do you ever worry about your children's safety while riding in a car?
- F. What makes you worry? (other children in the car, time of day, weather conditions, etc.)

(5) III. IMPACT OF KNOWING INDIVIDUALS INJURED IN AUTOMOBILE CRASHES

- A. Do you know anyone who was injured in an automobile crash?
- B. Do you think the crash/injury could have been prevented? How?
- C. Has this crash caused you to do anything different while driving or while traveling in a car? Do you now take precautions against injury that you didn't before?
- D. Do you do anything to protect your children against the possibility of being injured in a car crash? What do you do specifically? Why?

(10) IV. PROTECTIVE MEASURES -- CHILD SAFETY SEATS AND TRANSITION

- A. Did any of your children over the age of three or four ever ride in a child safety seat? How frequently? (Booster seats?)
- B. Did you try to get them to use safety belts right after they left the child safety seat? Why? Why not?
- C. (If did try to transition children) What did you do? How well did it work?
- D. Would you try something different now? What?
- E. How did your children feel about safety belts at first?

(15) V. CHILDREN'S CURRENT SAFETY BELT USAGE AND ATTITUDES

- A. When you now travel with your children, how often does each one wear safety belts? (show of hands: always, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, never) (Probe for age, sex and birth order differences)
- B. Is usage related to who is driving? Who else is in the car? The length and purpose of the trip? The type of car? Why?
- C. How does each child feel about wearing safety belts? Why do you think that they feel that way?
- D. Have your children changed in their use of safety belts? How? Why?
- E. In your opinion, what do you think is effective in getting children to wear safety belts?

- 1. Parent attitudes and behavior (yours and spouse)
- 2. Pressure from parents, relatives (especially grandparents), siblings
- 3. Educational programs at school
- 4. Radio and TV ads
- 5. Peer pressure
- 6. TV characters/actors
- 7. Reactions to law enforcement

(Non-users:)

- 1. Peer pressure
- 2. Lack of "macho" image
- 3. Invincible
- 4. Rather die than be in a wheelchair
- 5. Reaction against being told what to do
- 6. Defiance

- F. (For parents whose kids do not buckle up) What do you think would make you want to get your children to wear safety belts when they ride with you? Ride with others?

USER

- G. Do your children differ in their feelings about safety belts? Why? Are these differences related to age? Sex? Birth order?
- H. Have your children changed their attitudes and/or behavior about safety belts in any way? What do you think caused this change?

(5) VI. RESPONDENTS' CURRENT SAFETY USAGE

- A. How frequently do you wear your safety belt? (show of hands: always, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, never)
- B. Does your safety belt usage vary depending on whether you are driving with your children? Alone? With other adults? Why?

(10) VII. KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT THE LAW

- A. Does your state require children to buckle up? What is the age limit?
- B. Who is responsible for making children buckle up? (Parents, driver)
- C. Which locations are covered? Front seat? Back seat? Rear part of station wagon or van?
- D. Can a police officer stop you just because you or your child is not buckled?
- E. What are the consequences?
- F. Is the law enforced adequately for children? For adults? Why? Why not?
- G. Should enforcement be stricter?
- H. What have you heard about the safety of lap belts in the back seat?
- I. Do you use the law as the reason for requesting people to buckle up?

(45) VIII. REACTIONS TO PROGRAM OPTIONS

We would like your reaction to some different program ideas that have been proposed to encourage the use of safety belts by children. (Distribute program descriptions one at a time and discuss as many as time permits.)

- A. What is your overall reaction to this option?
- B. Do you think this program would be effective? Why? Why not? Are there certain aspects that you like? Don't like?
- C. Do you think this program would change parents' attitudes about children buckling up? Why? Why not?

USER

- D. Do you think that program would change parents' behavior about children buckling up? Why? Why not?
- E. Do you think this program would change children's attitudes and behavior about buckling up? Why? Why not?
- F. How would you change this program so that more kids would buckle up?
- G. Are there some groups of parents who would respond more favorably? Less favorably? Why? What about children?
- H. What groups would be affected the most? the least? Why?

(5) IX. SUMMARY

- A. Which program do you think would be the most effective? The least effective? Why?
- B. What ages groups would the program work best for?
- C. How would you get younger kids to use safety belts? Older kids?

(5) X. CONCLUSION

- A. Summary of comments
- B. Any questions
- C. Return to area in early June to talk with non-users -- any advice.
- D. Thank you

CHILDREN'S MODERATOR GUIDE

(5) I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Moderator introduction
- B. Topic and purpose of discussion (highway safety; one and a half hours)
- C. Audio taping/observers (confidentiality)
- D. Ground rules (one at a time; informal; speak freely; no right/wrong answers -- we are interested in learning about your opinions and what you do every day; we need and appreciate your input)
- E. Participant introduction (first name, grade, whether you have brothers and/or sisters and what ages they are)

(10) II. GENERAL DISCUSSION ABOUT PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION

- A. How many times a week (seven days) do you ride in a car? (show of hands)
- B. Who usually drives you? (mother, father, teacher, other)
- C. What type of car do you ride in most often? (sedan, station wagon, sports car, van, truck, etc.) What other cars do you ride in during the week?
- D. Do you ride in the front or back seat most of the time?

(5) III. CHILD SAFETY SEATS

- A. Do you remember using a child safety seat as a very young child (between ages of one and three)? (Child safety seat is specially constructed seat for young children -- seat is buckled to car with safety belt; child is buckled into seat.)
- B. What happened when you stopped using the seat? (switch to safety belt only or belt with booster seat or nothing)
- C. How old were you when you stopped using the child safety seat?

NON-USERS

(10) IV. CURRENT SAFETY BELT USAGE

- A. I asked for you to be invited here tonight because I wanted to talk with children like you who do not always wear your safety belt. Just to be sure that I am talking with the right children, tell me how often you wear the safety belt when you're in the car? (show of hands: sometimes, rarely, never)
- B. Do you wear your safety belt on some trips but not for others? For what kinds of trips do you wear your belt? (length of trip, who is driving, who else is in the car, time of day, weather conditions)
- C. Do you put your belt on more often in the front seat or the back seat? Why? Do you ever ride without a belt in the rear part of a station wagon or a van -- without a belt?
- D. Do you put your belt on more often when you are in the car with certain people? With whom do you wear a belt the most? Why?
- E. Why don't you use safety belts?
- F. Why do you think other kids don't wear belts? Why do some kids wear belts?
- G. (Optional) What happens in a carpool situation, for example, when there are more kids than safety belts?

(10) V. SAFETY BELT HISTORY

- A. How old were you when you first started using safety belts? Did you ever use a booster seat? When were you first able to buckle up without any help?
- B. What/who made you start using safety belts? (parent, grandparent, teacher, pediatrician, other)
- C. Did anyone show you how to use a safety belt? Who?
- D. Does anyone make sure that you are buckled up? Who? What do they do? Do you buckle up for some people and not others? Who?
- E. Do you buckle up automatically or do you wait until you are reminded?
- F. Do your younger/older brothers and/or sisters wear safety belts? Why? Why not? What about your friends? Why? Why not? What about kids younger than you? Older than you?
- G. What do your parents do about getting your brothers and/or sisters and friends to buckle up? Does it work? Why not?
- H. Do you notice if adults in the car buckle up? Other children? Do you ask them to buckle up? What do you say?
- I. How do you feel when other children (siblings and friends) and your parents do/do not buckle up?

NON-USERS

(5) VI. SAFETY BELT LAWS

- A. Is there a law requiring adults to wear safety belts?
Children?
- B. What is the age limit in the front seat? In the back seat?
- C. What happens if you do not wear your belt? (child, parent, driver)
- D. Do you think the law is a good idea or a bad idea? Why?
- E. Did you start buckling up because of the law?

(40) VII. REACTIONS TO PROGRAM OPTIONS

(All groups will have several different program options explained to them in order to obtain their reactions. In the groups with third, fourth and fifth graders, the moderator will distribute and read simple illustrations of options. The older children and parents will be given descriptions to read silently. In the round with users, participants will be told about the importance of their "expert" advice in helping to get everybody to buckle up. Participants will be asked to remember their own parent/child buckling up experience.)

- A. What is your overall reaction to this option?
- B. Do you think this program would be effective? Why? Why not?
- C. If a friend who does not wear a seat belt all the time participated in this program, what do you think he or she would say about the program? Do you think the program would increase their use of safety belts? Why? Why not? If so, how?
- D. Would the program change your use of safety belts? Why? Why not? If so, how?
- E. How would you change this program so that more kids buckle up?

(5) VIII. SUMMARY

- A. (Read titles) Which program did you like the most? The least? Why?
- B. Which program do you think would work the most effective in getting kids to wear belts? Not at all effective? Why?
- C. How would you get kids your age to use safety belts? Younger kids? Older kids?

(5) IX. CONCLUSION

- A. Summary of comments
- B. Any questions
- C. Thank you

PARENTS MODERATOR'S GUIDE

(5) I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Moderator introduction
- B. Topic and purpose of discussion (research concerning highway safety; one and a half to two hours)
- C. Audio taping/observers (confidentiality)
- D. Ground rules (one at a time; informal; speak freely; no right/wrong answers -- we are interested in learning about your opinions and what you do every day; we need and appreciate your honest input)
- E. Participant introduction (first name, number and ages of children living at home)

(10) II. GENERAL DISCUSSION

- A. How often do you drive your children in the car?
- B. When and where do you typically drive them? (school, sports, store, etc.)
- C. What types of vehicles do you drive them in? (sedan, station wagon, sports car, truck, van)
- D. Do other people drive your children on a regular basis? (spouse, sibling, grandparent, other relative, friend, babysitter, etc.) When and where do they drive them? What types of vehicles do they drive your children in? (sedan, station wagon, sports car, truck, van)
- E. Do you ever worry about your children's safety while riding in a car?
- F. What makes you worry? (other children in the car, time of day, weather conditions, etc.)

(5) III. IMPACT OF KNOWING INDIVIDUALS INJURED IN AUTOMOBILE CRASHES

- A. Do you know anyone who was injured in an automobile crash?
- B. Do you think the crash/injury could have been prevented? How?
- C. Has this crash caused you to do anything different while driving or while traveling in a car? Do you now take precautions against injury that you didn't before?
- D. Do you do anything to protect your children against the possibility of being injured in a car crash? What do you do specifically? Why?

NON-USERS

(10) IV. PROTECTIVE MEASURES -- CHILD SAFETY SEATS AND TRANSITION

- A. Did any of your children over the age of three or four ever ride in a child safety seat? How frequently? (Booster seats?)
- B. Did you try to get them to use safety belts right after they left the child safety seat? Why? Why not?
- C. (If did try to transition children) What did you do? How well did it work?
- D. Would you try something different now? What?
- E. How did your children feel about safety belts at first?

(15) V. CHILDREN'S CURRENT SAFETY BELT USAGE AND ATTITUDES

- A. When you now travel with your children, how often does each one wear safety belts? (show of hands: sometimes, rarely, never) (Probe for age, sex and birth order differences)
- B. Is usage related to who is driving? Who else is in the car? The length and purpose of the trip? The type of car? Why?
- C. How does each child feel about wearing safety belts? Why do you think that they feel that way?
- D. Have your children changed in their use of safety belts? How? Why?
- E. In your opinion, what do you think is effective in getting children to wear safety belts?
 - 1. Parent attitudes and behavior (yours and spouse)
 - 2. Pressure from parents, relatives (especially grandparents), siblings
 - 3. Educational programs at school
 - 4. Radio and TV ads
 - 5. Peer pressure
 - 6. TV characters/actors
 - 7. Reactions to law enforcement

(Non-users:)

- 1. Peer pressure
 - 2. Lack of "macho" image
 - 3. Invincible
 - 4. Rather die than be in a wheelchair
 - 5. Reaction against being told what to do
 - 6. Defiance
- F. What do you think would make you want to get your children to wear safety belts when they ride with you? Ride with others?

NON-USERS

- G. Do your children differ in their feelings about safety belts? Why? Are these differences related to age? Sex? Birth order?
- H. Have your children changed their attitudes and/or behavior about safety belts in any way? What do you think caused this change?

(5) VI. RESPONDENTS' CURRENT SAFETY USAGE

- A. How frequently do you wear your safety belt? (show of hands: sometimes, rarely, never)
- B. Does your safety belt usage vary depending on whether you are driving with your children? Alone? With other adults? Why?

(10) VII. KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT THE LAW

- A. Does your state require children to buckle up? What is the age limit?
- B. Who is responsible for making children buckle up? (Parents, driver)
- C. Which locations are covered? Front seat? Back seat? Rear part of station wagon or van?
- D. Can a police officer stop you just because you or your child is not buckled?
- E. What are the consequences?
- F. Is the law enforced adequately for children? For adults? Why? Why not?
- G. Should enforcement be stricter?
- H. What have you heard about the safety of lap belts in the back seat?
- I. Do you use the law as the reason for requesting people to buckle up?

(45) VIII. REACTIONS TO PROGRAM OPTIONS

We would like your reaction to some different program ideas that have been proposed to encourage the use of safety belts by children. (Distribute program descriptions one at a time and discuss as many as time permits.)

- A. What is your overall reaction to this option?
- B. Do you think this program would be effective? Why? Why not? Are there certain aspects that you like? Don't like?
- C. Do you think this program would change parents' attitudes about children buckling up? Why? Why not?

NON-USERS

- D. Do you think that program would change parents' behavior about children buckling up? Why? Why not?
- E. Do you think this program would change children's attitudes and behavior about buckling up? Why? Why not?
- F. How would you change this program so that more kids would buckle up?
- G. Are there some groups of parents who would respond more favorably? Less favorably? Why? What about children?
- H. What groups would be affected the most? the least? Why?

(5) IX. SUMMARY

- A. Which program do you think would be the most effective? The least effective? Why?
- B. What age groups would the program work best for?
- C. How would you get younger kids to use safety belts? Older kids?

(5) X. CONCLUSION

- A. Summary of comments
- B. Any questions
- C. Thank you

APPENDIX F

SCRIPTS FOR DISCUSSION OF ILLUSTRATIONS THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADE GROUPS

SCENE #1: TEACHER TALKING WITH JOHNNY

- The teacher is telling Johnny that safety belts save lives.
- Tell me what else the teacher might say to convince kids like Johnny to buckle up?
- Would anyone else at school talk to Johnny about safety belts? Such as the coach? Art teacher?
- Would Johnny's textbooks have anything in them about safety belts?
- Would there be any other ways Johnny might learn about safety belts in school? Such as posters? Coloring books?
- Do you think learning about safety belts in school is a good idea? Why?
- What kinds of kids need to learn about safety belts?
- Have any of your teachers ever talked with you about safety belts? Who?
- How did you feel about the teacher talking about safety belts?

SCENE #2: POLICE OFFICER GIVING SAFETY BELT SALUTE

(Police officer pulls up to intersection next to the car Johnny's riding in. The officer thinks that the driver is not buckled up and sees Johnny looking at him. The officer gives Johnny the safety belt salute as a reminder.)

- What do you think the officer is trying to tell Johnny by tugging the shoulder strap on his safety belt?
- What would Johnny think about the safety belt salute?
- Have you ever seen an officer salute drivers and passengers like this?
- Do you think this salute is a good idea? Do you think it reminds people to buckle up?
- What would Johnny do if the police officer did not notice that the driver was not buckled up?
- What would the officer do if the driver did not buckle up after he saluted?

SCENE #3: JOHNNY AND MOTHER IN CAR WITHOUT BELTS BUCKLED AND JOHNNY'S BABY SISTER IS NOT IN A CHILD SAFETY SEAT

- What do you notice about this picture?
- How does Johnny feel about riding without his safety belt buckled up? What would he be thinking about as he is riding?
- How does Johnny's mother feel about not wearing a belt? About her kids not being buckled or in a child safety seat?
- If the police officer sees Johnny's mother unbuckled, what do you think the officer would do?
- If the police officer sees Johnny unbuckled, what do you think he would do?
- If the car is in a crash, what do you think would happen to Johnny? His mother? His baby sister?

SCENE #4: POLICE OFFICER IS GIVING JOHNNY'S MOTHER A TICKET

- What is happening in this picture? Is the officer giving Johnny's mother a ticket because Johnny is not buckled? Because his mother is not buckled?
- How does Johnny feel about his mother getting a ticket because he is not buckled? Because she is not buckled?
- How does his mother feel?
- How much is the ticket?
- Who will buckle up after the officer writes the ticket? Johnny? His mother?
- Will they buckle up the next time they go in the car?
- How long do you think they will continue to buckle up after the mother gets the ticket?
- What do you think will work better: Giving the mother a ticket for not being buckled up herself? For not having her child buckled up?

SCENE #5: JOHNNY SEES ROAD SIGN SAYING "BUCKLE UP"

- Would Johnny notice the sign?
- Can Johnny read the sign?
- What would he do after he reads the sign?
- What would you do?
- Are signs helpful? Why? Why not?
- Where would you put these signs?

SCENE #6: JOHNNY IS TALKING WITH HIS FRIENDS

- Do Johnny's friends buckle up?
- What is Johnny saying to his friends about wearing safety belts?
- How could he persuade them to buckle up?
- Johnny is going to ask his friends to sign a pledge card to promise to buckle up. Have you ever heard about pledge cards? Do they sound like a good idea? Why? Why not?
- Would you ask your classmates to sign cards? Older kids? Younger kids?
- For how long should a person have to promise to buckle up? A week? A month?
- What if your class got a special prize for getting the most kids to sign pledge cards? Like a pizza party? Or prizes given by the school such as extra art supplies?
- What kinds of prizes would be really great?

SCENE #7: JOHNNY IS TALKING WITH HIS FATHER ABOUT SIGNING A PLEDGE CARD TO BUCKLE UP

- Why do you think Johnny is asking his father to sign a pledge card?
- What is Johnny saying to his father?
- What would his father say back to Johnny?
- How does Johnny feel about asking his father to sign the card?
- What suggestions would you make to help Johnny get his father and other adults to sign pledge cards?
- Would having a contest with other classes make a difference? Why? Why not?
- What kinds of prizes would you suggest?

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