Identifying Strategies To Improve the Effectiveness of Booster Seat Laws

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16. Abstract

The objective of this project was to identify strategies to improve the effectiveness of booster seat laws. The project explored the possible factors that relate to the use and nonuse of booster seats, and examined the attitudes of law enforcement officers and parents/caregivers concerning booster seat laws. As of June 2007, 38 States and the District of Columbia have included booster seat provisions in their child restraint laws. A recent NHTSA-sponsored observational survey found 41% of children age 4 to 8 restrained in boosters. A literature review uncovered the following reasons that parents/caregivers do not restrain their children in boosters: misunderstanding of the law; underestimation of risk; lack of knowledge about the benefits of booster seats; and permissive parenting style. An observational study conducted in this project found a 9.1-percentage-point increase in the use of child safety seats and booster seats for children age 4 to 8 following enactment of an enhanced child restraint law (booster seat law). Barriers to the use and enforcement of booster seat laws were addressed in focus groups with parents/caregivers and law enforcement officers. Barriers included parent/caregiver ignorance of child restraint laws and low risk perception; lack of knowledge about the safety benefits of booster seats among the public, as well as among law enforcement officers and members of the courts; low threat of being ticketed for booster seat violations; and lack of commitment to child passenger safety (CPS) by law enforcement top management.

Educational, enforcement, and legislative strategies were developed to improve the effectiveness of booster seat laws. The educational strategies are teaching parents/caregivers about best practices for restraint use and the risks of inappropriate restraint use; and identification of booster seat resources for low-income groups. The enforcement strategies include enlisting support for CPS activities from chiefs of police; training law enforcement officers and judges about CPS best practices and their State laws; high-visibility enforcement of child restraint laws; recording appropriate child restraint law violation data on citations; including law enforcement officers in publicity promoting booster seat laws and best practices; and use of fear appeals in CPS messages to increase parent/caregiver risk perception. Legislative strategies are enactment of booster seat laws in all States; strengthening of booster seat laws to meet best practices; and enactment of primary booster seat laws as well as primary seat belt laws.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1975, motor vehicle crashes have been the leading cause of death for children in the United States. The most effective strategy for preventing injury and death to children involved in crashes is using age- and size-appropriate restraints. TransAnalytics, LLC, completed a study that examined the factors that relate to the use and nonuse of booster seats, and identified strategies to improve the effectiveness of enhanced child restraint laws that cover booster-seat-age children (booster seat laws). Project activities included:

- an inventory of changes in State child occupant-protection laws since 2002;
- a literature review on the use and nonuse of booster seats;
- an observational survey of booster seat use before and after enactment of a booster seat law in Wisconsin;
- focus groups with parents or caregivers to assess attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and use of booster seat laws;
- focus groups with law enforcement officers to assess their attitudes, knowledge, and enforcement of booster seat laws; and
- a brainstorming session with experts and law enforcement officers discussing the challenges of booster seat enforcement.

Review of Changes in Booster Seat Laws

While the number of States and Territories that have enacted booster seat provisions has increased from 11 to 39 since 2000, a wide variation in age, height, and weight requirements still exists. Several States have changed their age and weight requirements to meet NHTSA's best practices for booster-seat-age children. The number of jurisdictions with laws that cover children 4 to 8 years old (currently 18, with 2 of these covering children up to age 9) has more than quadrupled since 2002. Within the same time period, the number of jurisdictions with laws that cover children who weigh up to 80 pounds has increased to 10 states. Unfortunately, more than half of the States with booster seat law provisions are still operating below best practices for age and weight. In 2002, only 3 States had height provisions in their booster seat laws. As of mid-2007, 10 States had height requirements that represent best practice (up to 57 inches). Four other States have height requirements that fall short of best practice recommendations.

Literature Review

A review of recent research noted differences in knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions between parents and caregivers who use booster seats and those who do not. The following factors were associated with nonuse of booster seats: lack of understanding of the laws; low risk perception; permissive parenting; lack of understanding of the safety benefits of booster seats; and child discomfort or resistance.

Observational studies conducted during the past 5 years have reported varying percentages of 4- to 8-year-old children restrained in booster seats; however, the most recent NHTSA observational study (Glassbrenner & Ye, 2007) found 41% restrained in booster seats, 17% in child safety seats, and 42% either inadequately protected in seat belts (33%) or completely unrestrained (9%).

Effects of Upgrading Booster Seat Laws

Observations of booster seat use before and after Wisconsin passed its booster seat law showed a significant increase in the percentage of appropriately retrained children age 4 to 8 following enactment of a booster seat law. Child safety seat and booster seat use in this age group increased by 9.1 percentage points in Wisconsin, from 48.6% in the pre-law period to 57.7% in the post-law period. Observations of booster seat use in a comparison State, Michigan, showed an increase of 5.9 percentage points during the same time periods; however the increase was not statistically significant.

Law Enforcement Attitudes

Law enforcement officers identified a number of barriers to enforcing booster seat laws. These include: lack of commitment by top management (e.g., police chiefs) to enforce these laws; a shortage of law enforcement officers knowledgeable on the subject of child safety seats and booster seats; lack of resources to enforce booster seat laws; booster seat laws that are secondary violations; and lenient judges who dismiss booster seat citations. Law enforcement officers who identified reasons for parent and caregiver nonuse of booster seats cited the public's ignorance of the child restraint laws, and the public's failure to recognize the degree of risk to unrestrained or inappropriately restrained children.

Parent and Caregiver Attitudes

The parents and caregivers identified several barriers to booster seat use attributed to ignorance, parenting styles, and lack of enforcement. Specifically, many parents and caregivers lack an understanding of (a) child occupant protection laws, (b) the risks involved to their children when they are not appropriately restrained and (c) the safety benefits offered by booster seats. In addition, many parents fail to enforce discipline when children resist using the seats. Because of the low perceived threat of getting a ticket for booster seat violations, parents have not been compelled to change their habits.

Strategies

The following list of strategies to improve the effectiveness of booster seat laws was developed from the information generated from the previous task activities. Although many of these strategies are common practice, they continue to be valid approaches to increase booster seat use.

Education

It is important to educate those parents and caregivers who do not use, or inconsistently use, booster seats. The assumption is that once parents and caregivers know how, when, and why they should use booster seats, they will properly secure their booster-age children. Each year, new children reach booster seat age, so the need to educate parents and caregivers remains constant. Efforts to educate parents and caregivers need to be periodically refreshed to address changing sensibilities, changes in law, and updated research about child passenger safety. Topics that should be taught include:

- The best practices for properly securing booster-seat-age and sized children;
- The risks caused by inappropriate restraint use; and
- Where to find booster seat resources in low-income communities.

Enforcement

Effective enforcement of booster seat laws requires coordination between several sectors of the enforcement community. The following strategies are interdependent, and address five key points:

- Motivate law enforcement leadership to enforce occupant restraint laws;
- Train law enforcement officers about child passenger safety issues;
- Strictly enforce child passenger safety laws;
- Train judges about child passenger safety issues to uphold citations; and
- Collect appropriate enforcement data to analyze and refine booster seat law enforcement efforts.

Legislation

A final strategy is to promote stronger booster seat laws (e.g., without unnecessary exemptions in conformity with best practice recommendations) and primary enforcement of seat belt laws. This study showed that passage of a booster seat law increases child safety seat and booster seat use. To strengthen these laws, there is a need to increase the age and height limits in the booster seat provisions of the child restraint law in many States (e.g., at least to 8 years old and 4‘9” tall). The study found that there are some misperceptions by parents and caregivers that the State law represents the best practice; therefore, if they follow the law, their children are safely secured. However, the booster seat laws do not represent best practice in all States.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Since 1975, motor vehicle crashes have been the leading cause of death for children in the United States (NHTSA, 2002, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006). Use of an age- and size-appropriate restraint is the most effective strategy for preventing injury and death to children involved in crashes. In 2005, of the 304 fatalities among children 4 to 8 years old for which restraint use was known, 136 (45%) were unrestrained (NHTSA, 2006).[1] The percentage of unrestrained children in this age group who die in single-vehicle crashes involving passenger cars is more than twice that of children who are restrained (NHTSA, 2005). While research shows that the use of an adult seat belt reduces the risk of fatalities by 48% when compared to no restraint use at all, a belt-positioning booster seat reduces the risk by 54% (NHTSA, 2002). Other research has shown a three-fold increase risk of significant injury to children who were in adult seat belts when compared to children in belt-positioning boosters (Durbin, Elliot, & Winston, 2003). Appendix A illustrates and describes the types of booster seats.

Despite the evidence for the efficacy of child restraint systems, children continue to ride unrestrained or improperly restrained in motor vehicles. Recent observational studies on children in the booster-seat-age group show that 42% are still either unrestrained or in an adult seat belt (Glassbrenner & Ye, 2007). Specifically, Glassbrenner and Ye (2007) found 41% restrained in booster seats, 17% in child safety seats, 33% inadequately protected in seat belts alone, and 9% completely unrestrained.

There are many reasons why parents/caregivers do not restrain their child passengers according to recommended best practices. These include misperception of risk, misunderstanding of child restraint laws and best practice, and permissiveness in allowing children to graduate to a seat belt before the seat belt will fit them correctly (Winston, Moll, Durbin, & Kassam-Adams, 2001).

In 2002, recognizing the safety benefits of booster seats for children age 4 to 8, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration revised its best practice recommendation for booster seat use to cover all children who have outgrown child safety seats until they are at least 8 years old, unless they are 4’ 9” tall. NHTSA encourages States to adopt laws that provide appropriate restraint use for all children, including enhanced child restraint laws that cover booster-seat-age children (booster seat laws). Great progress has been made over the past 5 years; the number of States that have passed booster seat revisions to the child restraint laws has grown from 11 to 38 States. Unfortunately, there are wide variations in these laws, especially relating to age limits (e.g., up to 6, 7, or 8 years old), weight limits (e.g., up to 40, 60, or 80 pounds), penalties (e.g., driver points), fines, and enforcement (e.g., secondary versus primary) (NHTSA, 2007, IIHS, 2007). In addition, there are many States that have no type of provisions for booster-seat-age children.

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[1] The term “4 to 8 years old” refers to children who are 4, 5, 6, and 7 years old. (http://www.nhtsa.gov/cars/rules/rulings/TREAD/MileStones/BoosterSeat.htm)

The public supports strong child restraint laws (Boyle & VanDerwolf, 2005); and recent studies have shown booster seat use is higher in States that have booster seat laws (Gunn, Phillippi, & Cooper, 2007; Winston, Kallan, Elliott, Xie, & Durbin, 2007). However, in past focus group studies, law enforcement officers have described the difficulties they have encountered in enforcing booster seat laws. To increase public compliance with booster seat laws, they gave the following recommendations: stronger commitment by the department to enforce booster laws; simpler language in the booster seat law; application of points to driver license and higher fines; and combining booster seat ticketing efforts with current seat belt enforcement programs, such as *Click It or Ticket* (Raymond, Seifert, Golembiewski, & Knoblauch, 2004).

1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

The goals of this project are to build upon the findings of recent NHTSA research and identify strategies to improve the effectiveness of booster seat laws. Strategies that have been used to increase booster seat use include: (a) enhancing public education campaigns about booster seat laws and the efficacy of booster seat use; (b) Improving enforcement procedures (e.g., more training for officers); (c) promoting the educational role of officers (e.g., presenting programs to children in kindergarten through 2nd grade); and (d) using creative enforcement strategies (e.g., coupling seat belt with booster seat violations). To identify new strategies, more information about what parents/caregivers and law enforcement officers know about their State booster seat laws is needed. Specifically, how do booster seat laws affect the behavior of parents/caregivers and law enforcement? Do parents/caregivers understand differences between best practice and the requirements of their State's booster seat law? How does the enforcement of booster laws differ in States with a primary law versus those with a secondary law? Finally, what consequences do law enforcement officers impose on booster seat law violators (e.g., warnings instead of citations)?

The following tasks, which build upon the findings of recent NHTSA research, provide the background information needed to develop strategies to enhance the effectiveness of booster seat laws:

1. An inventory of changes in State occupant protection laws since 2002;

2. A review of the research literature to update knowledge about the factors that relate to use and nonuse of booster seats and strategies that have been successful in increasing booster seat use;

3. Collection of observational booster seat use data in a State before and after a booster seat law was enacted (Wisconsin) and a comparison State without a booster seat law (Michigan);

4a. Focus groups with parents/caregivers in four cities to assess their attitudes and knowledge about booster seat laws and enforcement of these laws (Richmond, VA, Pittsburgh, PA, Chicago, IL, and Sacramento, CA), to use as discussion topics for the brainstorming session;

4b. Focus groups with law enforcement officers in the same four cities to assess their attitudes and knowledge about booster seat laws and enforcement of these laws, to use as discussion topics for the brainstorming session;

5. A brainstorming session (Washington, DC) with CPS experts and law enforcement agents to identify potential strategies to enhance the effectiveness of booster seat laws; and

6. Distillation of the findings from Tasks 1 to 5 to develop strategies to enhance the effectiveness of booster seat laws.

The next section of this report provides more detail about the methodology for conducting each of these project tasks.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This section of the report provides a description of each task activity; identifies the purpose of the activity; and explains how the results of each task were used to develop the methods employed in the subsequent tasks.

2.1 INVENTORY OF STATE CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS

The purpose of this task activity was to inventory changes to or additions of booster seat laws in States during the past five years. Methods used to gather this information involved Internet searches for current lists of State child restraint and seat belt laws prepared by Federal and State highway safety agencies such as NHTSA and organizations such as the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety. The following information was selected from the State child restraint and seat belt lists:

- Effective date of the law;
- Coverage of the law (e.g., maximum age and or weight requirements for child restraints; whether there is a booster provision; age at which a seat belt is allowed; whether seat belts are required in rear seats);
- Maximum fines;
- Driver record points and insurance points assessed;
- Major exemptions to the child passenger laws; and
- Laws preventing the transport of children in cargo areas of pickup trucks.

The information was then organized by State into a summary sheet which describes the State's child restraint and seat belt laws and other provisions related to occupant restraint and occupant protection. Draft versions were then submitted to State occupant protection officials for verification of accuracy of the data. These officials were identified through the list of State child passenger safety contacts on NHTSA's website. A summary of the changes in State laws over the past five-year period is provided in section 3 of this report.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive review of the research literature included the following topics. The demographic characteristics of booster seat users and nonusers; parental/caregiver reasons for inconsistent booster seat use; barriers encountered by law enforcement officers in enforcing booster seat laws; interventions that were implemented to increase booster seat use; effective strategies used to enforce booster seat laws; and, the effectiveness of booster seat laws in increasing booster seat use. For the computerized searches, the following search terms were used: child passenger safety (CPS); child restraints; booster seat use; vehicle design; crash and injury data; intervention programs; enforcement; child restraint laws; booster seat laws; parent/caregiver; risk perception; awareness; attitude; behavioral issues; and public information and education. The following is a list of sources used for this literature review.

(1) A computerized search of relevant subject databases included: (a) the Transportation Research Information Services, which covers all of the national transportation science and highway safety research and information produced by the U.S. Department of Transportation and its agencies; (b) SCOPUS, produced by the Elsevier Publishing Company, which covers a large selection of medical and health science journals; and (c) PychInfo and Sociological Abstracts, which cover a large selection of behavioral sciences, social psychology, and psychological journals.

(2) A computerized search by Northwestern University Transportation Library staff using its electronic card catalog and TRANSPORT (the premier international transportation science subject database).

(3) Communications with peer group sources and professional associations (e.g., Transportation Research Board's Occupant Protection Committee – ANB45) to identify the most current research documents, unpublished interim and draft final reports, and research-in-progress reports.

Study reports relevant to the aforementioned topics of investigation in this project were acquired through vendors, full-text electronic sources, peers, and in-house collections. Over 75 relevant research studies in journal articles, government publications, dissertations, information sheets, and gray papers were read; and categorized by type of study (i.e., child restraint use and misuse observations, crash and injury data, telephone interview, focus group, evaluation of intervention, or anecdotal). The task report was then prepared summarizing the status of State child restraint laws; booster seat use data (i.e., observational surveys, crash, and telephone); parent/caregiver reasons for inconsistent booster seat use; law enforcements' views about the booster seat laws; and potential strategies recommended from the studies.

2.3 OBSERVATIONAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A BOOSTER SEAT LAW

The task objective was to determine whether the enactment of a booster seat law would increase booster seat use. This was accomplished by collecting booster seat use data in a State before and after booster seat legislation was enacted. Booster seat use data were also collected during the same time periods in a comparison State without a booster seat law. Wisconsin was selected as the treatment State; its booster law was enacted June 1, 2006. Michigan was selected as the comparison State, because no booster seat law was enacted in 2006, and because of its similar socio-demographic characteristics and its proximity to Wisconsin. Figure 1 summarizes Wisconsin's and Michigan's child passenger safety laws.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation and CPS advocacy groups publicized the new law. Wisconsin DOT developed a one-page information sheet and card that provided details of the new law for law enforcement personnel and the public. The Wisconsin Bureau of Transportation Safety also published an article on the new law in its May newsletter. The American Automobile Association of Wisconsin and Safe Kids Worldwide (SKW) held a news conference in Madison on June 1, 2006, in conjunction with SKW car seat checks around the State.

Wisconsin

Prior to June 1, 2006, Wisconsin law required all children under age 4 to be in a child restraint, and children between age 4 and 8 to be in a child restraint or a seat belt. As of June 1, 2006, children who are between 4 and 8 or who weigh between 40 and 79 pounds, and are no taller than 4 feet 9 inches, are to be restrained in a booster seat. The law does not require the booster seat to be placed in a back seat. Written warnings were issued for first-time violations. Citations were issued starting January 1, 2007. The child restraint law is a primary enforcement law. The seat belt law is a secondary enforcement law.

Michigan

All children under the age of 4 must be in a child restraint system, and children between the age of 4 and 16 must wear a seat belt. All front-seat occupants must wear seat belts.

Both CPS and seat belt laws are primary enforcement laws.

Figure 1. Child Restraint Laws in Wisconsin and Michigan.

Booster seat observation sites were located in urban and suburban areas, and were selected based on high numbers of target vehicles entering the site, safety, location, and permission to collect data at the site. The most common sites were shopping centers with retail stores that attract the target vehicle group (e.g., Wal-Mart, Toys R Us); elementary schools and child care centers; health care centers; and recreational sites. This study used a convenience sample.

Data collectors stationed in parking lots targeted drivers who were parking their cars and transporting at least one child passenger who appeared to be 4- to 8-years old. For drivers who agreed to participate in the study, data collectors noted the vehicle type and number of passengers, and recorded the seating positions, race, gender, and restraint use of all occupants in the vehicle.

Baseline data (pre-intervention) were collected in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, area between May 9 and 11, 2006, and in the Detroit, Michigan, area between May 18 and 24, 2006. Post-intervention data were collected in Wisconsin from September 6 to 23, 2006, and in Michigan from September 11 to October 3, 2006.

2.4 FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Separate focus groups with parents/caregivers of booster-seat-age children and law enforcement officers were held to gain a better understanding of the reasons parents/caregivers do not consistently use booster seats and the reasons that law enforcement officers may not enforce booster seat laws. The information gathered in the focus groups received consideration

in the formulation of potential strategies by the brainstorming session panelists in the following task activity.

Focus groups with parents/caregivers provided an effective qualitative way to discern their feelings about booster seat use and booster seat law enforcement. In small groups, they felt comfortable to share their opinions and knowledge about child passenger safety, booster seats, child restraint laws, and enforcement of these laws. They were asked their opinions on the type of strategies that would make booster seat laws more effective in increasing booster seat use in the Nation.

Focus groups with law enforcement officers provided an effective qualitative opportunity to learn about officers' feelings on the same topics. Discussions provided insight into what the officers knew about booster seats, booster laws, and the issues surrounding enforcement of booster seat laws. The small groups provided a comfortable setting for the officers to speak honestly about the barriers to enforcing child restraint laws and to candidly discuss strategies that would be effective in promoting booster seat laws.

During October and November 2006, focus groups were held in four cities representing geographically diverse areas of the country. The States chosen for the focus groups all had booster seat laws; however, they varied in the maximum age covered and whether enforcement was primary or secondary. The booster seat law was primary in California, Illinois, and Virginia, but secondary in Pennsylvania at the time the focus groups were conducted. The law covered children up to age 6 in California and Virginia, and up to age 8 in Illinois and Pennsylvania. The cities were Richmond, VA (south), Pittsburgh, PA (north), Chicago, IL (midwest), and Sacramento, CA (west). Focus group companies managed the recruitment of the parent/caregiver groups, preparation of the rooms, equipment, refreshments, incentives, and reminder phone calls to participants. The focus group companies were given a list of requirements for recruiting parents/caregivers, including: they transport booster-seat-age children; they hold a valid driver's license; and they use booster seats either full time or sometimes.

Law enforcement officers were recruited through requests made to NHTSA Regional Administrators, State CPS coordinators, and NHTSA law enforcement liaisons. A mix of State and local law enforcement officers (both CPS-certified and non-CPS-certified) serving small, medium, and large communities was desired. An e-mail sent to the perspective participants explained the project objectives and requested their participation in the focus group sessions.

The focus group moderator prepared two topic guides to lead the sessions. The parental/caregiver topic guide was prepared after reviewing the literature review task report and holding a briefing with the principal investigator (PI) to discuss past research findings documenting reasons for inconsistent booster seat use (misperception of safety, premature graduation to seat belts, lack of knowledge about law, permissive behavior with complaining children, etc.). The law enforcement topic guide was prepared in the same manner, but more law-and-enforcement-based topics were discussed in the briefing with the moderator. Draft topic guides were developed; reviewed by the PI and NHTSA and then approved for use. A message concept exercises for focus group participants was also developed by the moderator and PI,

based on what was learned in the literature review about the reasons for nonuse of booster seats, and the types of educational appeals that have been successful in influencing parent/caregiver behavior.

Three focus groups were conducted in each of the four cities; one consisting of law enforcement officers, one consisting of female parents/caregivers, and one consisting of male parents/caregivers. Twelve participants were included in each group. Focus group sessions lasted 90 minutes to 2 hours each, and were audio-recorded by facility staff.

2.5 BRAINSTORMING SESSION

A brainstorming session was held with CPS informants, NHTSA communications and booster program staff, CPS-certified law enforcement officers, and researchers to discuss implications of the findings from previous task activities and to formulate specific strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of booster seat laws (i.e., increase booster seat use among the public). Their expertise was used to gain a better understanding of the difficulties in implementing booster seat interventions, reasons for intervention success and failure, and the challenges of enforcing various kinds of child restraint laws.

Panelists were selected on the basis of their experience with developing, administering, and promoting CPS programs. Law enforcement officers were selected based on their CPS experience (e.g., CPS-certified), leadership (e.g., experience conducting child restraint law enforcement programs), and through recognition by NHTSA Regional Administrators as active CPS promoters. Panelists in attendance were:

- Emilie Crown (Montgomery County Fire Rescue, MD)
- Tracy Hewitt (Center for Injury Research and Prevention, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, PA)
- Officer Timothy Kehoe (Chesterfield Township Police Department, VA)
- Officer Ken Lynch (Orland Park Township Police Department, IL)
- Chief Leo McCarthy (Moon Township Police Department, PA)
- Officer Joseph Riley (Elks Grove Police Department, CA)
- Tanya Chin Ross (Safe Kids Worldwide, Washington, DC)
- Tracy Whitman (Maryland Kids in Safety Seats, MD)
- Kelli England Will, Ph.D. (Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, VA)

The NHTSA project manager, staff from several divisions of NHTSA (Office of Behavioral Safety Research, Occupant Protection Division, and the Office of Communications and Consumer Information), and TransAnalytics project staff also attended.

The brainstorming session moderator and PI developed a session agenda based on the task objectives. The agenda was reviewed by NHTSA. The session started with an overview of the preceding task activities and NHTSA's current efforts on the topic (e.g., roll-call video to educate law enforcement on booster seat issues). A discussion of barriers to enforcement

activities and parent/caregiver misperceptions of risk followed. The afternoon session focused on developing strategies to enhance the effectiveness of booster seat laws.

The brainstorming session agenda included:

- Introductions and opening remarks;
- Purpose of project and brainstorming session;
- Current NHTSA booster seat programs and activities;
- Moderator's rules and goals of session;
- Summary of qualitative research;
- Key barriers to enforcing booster seat laws;
- "Immunity fallacy" report and video;
- Identification of realistic law enforcement approaches;
- Identification of best messages to give to enforcement agencies;
- Identification of best messages for law enforcement to give to the public;
- Identification of best strategies for enforcement approaches;
- Identification of best strategies for media approaches; and
- Recommendations for final report.

2.6 DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES

Strategies were developed through consideration of the outcomes of each project task. Specifically, the most promising ideas and recommendations culled from the literature review were selected for discussion in the focus groups with parents/caregivers and law enforcement officers. Focus group participants also provided their perspectives on nonuse of booster seats, and strategies that may be effective in increasing booster seat use. The highest ranked strategies and messages voted upon by the focus group participants were then discussed during the brainstorming sessions. Brainstorming session participants also provided informed opinions about the most effective strategies and messages for increasing the effectiveness of booster seat laws.

Strategies were formulated in three areas to address: (1) barriers to booster seat use caused by parent/caregiver knowledge deficits (educational strategies); (2) barriers encountered by law enforcement officers in enforcing booster seat laws (enforcement strategies); and (3) barriers to booster seat use caused by weak or non-existent laws covering children age 4 to 8 (legislative strategies).

3.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Booster seat laws have been enacted in 76% of the States. This study provided evidence that the enactment of booster seat laws works to some degree. However, the study also found that booster seat use is still relatively low in the Nation. What are the reasons for this behavior? Parents/caregivers mentioned a multitude of reasons for inconsistent booster seat use including: lack of knowledge of the safety benefits of booster seats, misperceptions of risk from inappropriate restraint use, confusion about the booster seat law, and low threat of ticketing for booster seat violations. Law enforcement officers cited several explanations for low enforcement of booster seat laws. CPS experts and law enforcement leaders (in the CPS field) expressed strong opinions for potential strategies to improve booster seat use and to make booster seat laws more effective. This section provides the results of each task activity and culminates with a list of potential strategies to enhance the effectiveness of booster seat laws.

3.1 INVENTORY OF STATE CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS

The objective of the first task activity in this project was to inventory changes in State child restraint laws since 2002. The first child restraint law in the United States was passed in Tennessee in 1978 (Agran, Anderson, & Winn, 2004). In 2000, the first enhanced child restraint law (known as a booster seat law) was passed in the State of Washington (effective July 1, 2002) to cover provisions for booster-seat-age children (Winston et al., 2007).

All 50 States and the District of Columbia have child restraint laws and 49 States have seat belt laws. State laws vary in their definitions of which children must be restrained in which restraint type, and in which vehicle positions they must be restrained. Laws in some States allow children riding in the rear seat to be unrestrained. In some States, children as young as 5 may be restrained using the adult seat belt. These two practices increase the risk for serious injury or death. At the other end of the continuum are laws that require children up to age 9 or 80 pounds or 57 inches tall to be restrained in a child safety seat or booster seat. Approximately three-fourths of the States have booster seat provisions for children who have outgrown their child safety seats, but there are exemptions and limited coverage to many of these laws. A complete description of each State's occupant protection laws is provided in Appendix B. Table 1 summarizes the status of occupant restraint laws in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. It includes the effective date of the original booster seat law within each State.

By July 1, 2002, 11 States had enacted some provisions in their child restraint laws mandating booster seats for children older than 4 years of age. The provisions for booster seat coverage by age varied among those States. There were 8 States (AR, CA, MD, NE, OR, SC, VA, and WA) with maximum age up to 6; 2 States (DE and RI) with maximum age up to 7; and 1 State (NJ) with maximum age up to 8. In addition, 5 States by July 1, 2002 had a maximum weight requirement as well. Four States (AR, CA, DE, and RI) had a 60-pound maximum requirement; and 1 State (SC) had an 80-pound maximum requirement (Safe Kids Worldwide, 2007).

By August 1, 2005, 21 more States (totaling 32 States and the District of Columbia) had enacted provisions in their child restraint laws mandating booster seats for children older than 4 years of age. Sixteen States had a maximum age up to 6 (AR, CA, CO, GA, IA, LA, MD, MT, NE, NH, NV, OK, OR, SC, VA, and WA). Six States had a maximum age up to 7 (DE, ID, NM, NY, ND and RI). Eight States and the District of Columbia had a maximum age up to 8 (DC, IL, IN, ME, NJ, NC, PA, WV, and VT), and Tennessee and Wyoming had a maximum age up to 9. As of August 1, 2005, there were 9 States with weight provisions. Five States (AR, CA, DE, NM, and RI) had a 60-pound maximum requirement; and four States (ME, NC, RI, and SC) had an 80-pound maximum requirement. Tennessee included a height requirement of 57 inches, and West Virginia included a 56-inch height requirement. Two of these States (NC and RI) had an 80-pound maximum requirement, and New Mexico included a 60-pound maximum weight requirement (NHTSA, 2005; Safe Kids Worldwide, 2007).

As of July 1, 2007, a total of 38 States and the District of Columbia had enacted provisions in their child restraint laws mandating booster seat or appropriate restraint use for older child passengers. This includes 5 States added during the prior 2-year period (AL, HI, KS, MO, and WI). Of the 5 new States with booster seat laws, 1 State has a maximum age up to 6 (AL); and 4 States have a maximum age of 8 (HI, KS, MO, and WI). Washington State, Oregon, and Virginia increased their age requirement from age 6 to age 8 during the summer of 2007. The current age requirements within these 39 jurisdictions are shown below:

- (Up to Age 6)– AL, AR, CA, CO, GA, IA, LA, MD, MT, NE, NV, NH, OK, and SC.
- (Up to Age 7) – CT, DE, ID, ND, NM, NY, and RI.
- (Up to Age 8) – District of Columbia and the States of HI, IL, IN, KS, ME, MO, NJ, NC, OR, PA, VT, VA, WA, WV, and WI.
- (Up to Age 9) – TN and WY.

Eight States that have a 60-pound maximum weight requirement (AR, CA, CT, DE, LA, MT, NV, and NM) and 10 States have an 80-pound maximum weight requirement (KS, ME, MO, NJ, NC, ND, RI, SC, WI, and WY).

Fourteen States have enacted booster seat provisions by including a maximum height requirement in their child restraint laws. These height requirements range from less than 54 to less than 57 inches, as indicated below:

- < 54 inches: RI.
- < 55 inches: CO and NH.
- < 56 inches: ND.
- < 57 inches: GA, HI, KS, MO, OR, PA, TN, WA, WV, and WI.

Fourteen States will allow the use of a lap-only belt for the booster-age child, if the vehicle does not have a lap and shoulder seat belt available for using a belt positioning booster (BPB) seat. They are: CA, CO, GA, HI, IL, IN, LA, MO, NY, NC, ND, OK, OR, and WA.

While the number of jurisdictions that have enacted booster seat provisions has increased from 11 to 39 within the past 5 years, a wide variation in the age and weight requirements still

exists. Improvements have been seen in several States with age and weight requirements meeting best practices for booster-seat-age children. The number of jurisdictions with laws that cover children up to age 8 (currently 18 with 2 of these covering children up to age 9) has more than quadrupled since 2002. Within the same time period, the number of jurisdictions with laws that cover children who weigh up to 80 pounds (currently 10 States) has increased tenfold. Unfortunately, more than one-half of the States with booster seat law provisions are still operating below best practices for age. With regard to improvements in the height provisions of booster seat laws, only 3 States had such a provision in 2002. As of mid-2007, 10 States have height requirements that represent best practice (up to 57 inches). Four other States have height requirements that fall short of best practice recommendations.

Appendix C illustrates the change in booster seat requirements by State, by upper age limit, between 2002 and 2007.

Table 1 – Basic Provisions of State Child Restraint and Seat Belt Laws (as of July 1, 2007).

State	Child Restraint Law						Seat Belt Law					"Pickup" Provisions
	"Booster" Law *	Child Restraint/Booster Required	Enforced	Fine	Points		Required to be restrained	Enforced	Fine	Points		
					License	Insurance				License	Insurance	
Alabama	Yes 7/1/06	< Age 6	Primary	25	Yes	Yes	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	25	No	No	No
Alaska	No	< Age 4	Primary	50	Yes	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	15	No	No	No
Arizona	No	< Age 5	Primary	50	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	25	No	No	No
Arkansas	Yes 7/1/01	< Age 6 and < 60 lbs	Primary	100	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	25	No	No	Yes
California	Yes 1/1/02	< Age 6 or < 60 lbs	Primary	100	Yes	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	20	No	No	Yes
Colorado	Yes 8/1/03	< Age 6 and < 55"	Conditional	50	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	15	Yes if < 17	Yes if < 17	Yes
Connecticut	Yes 10/1/05	< Age 7 or < 60 lbs	Primary	60	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	15	No	No	Yes
Delaware	Yes 1/1/03	< Age 7 and < 60 lbs	Conditional	29	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	25	No	No	No
District of Columbia	Yes 10/16/02	< Age 8	Primary	75	Yes	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	50	Yes	Yes	Yes
Florida	No	< Age 4	Primary	60	Yes	Yes	Drivers, all front-seat occupants, less than 18 in the rear seat.	Conditional	30	No	No	Yes
Georgia	Yes 7/1/04	< Age 6 and < 57"	Primary	50	Yes	No	Drivers, all front-seat occupants, less than 18 in the rear seat.	Primary	15	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	Yes 7/1/07	< Age 6 and < 57"	Primary	100	No	No	Drivers, all front-seat occupants, age 8-17 in the rear seat.	Primary	45	No	No	Yes
Idaho	Yes 7/1/05	< Age 7	Primary	100	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Secondary	25	No	No	No
Illinois	Yes 1/1/04	< Age 8	Primary	50	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants if driver is 18 or older; Driver and all occupants if driver is less than 18	Primary	25	No	No	No
Indiana	Yes 7/1/05	< Age 8	Primary	25	Yes	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	25	No	No	No
Iowa	Yes 7/1/04	< Age 6	Primary	25	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	25	No	No	No

* Effective date of original booster seat law.

Table 1 – Basic Provisions of State Child Restraint and Seat Belt Laws (as of July 1, 2007).

State	Child Restraint Law						Seat Belt Law					"Pickup" Provisions
	"Booster" Law *	Child Restraint/Booster Required	Enforced	Fine	Points		Required to be restrained	Enforced	Fine	Points		
					License	Insurance				License	Insurance	
Kansas	Yes 7/1/06	< Age 8 and < 80 lbs and < 57"	Primary	20	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	10	No	No	Yes
Kentucky	No	< 41"	Primary	50	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	25	No	No	No
Louisiana	Yes 1/1/04	< Age 6 and < 61 lbs	Primary	50	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	25	No	No	Yes
Maine	Yes 1/1/03	< Age 8 and < 80 lbs	Primary	62	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Yes	62	No	No	Yes
Maryland	Yes 10/1/03	< Age 4 or < 40 lbs	Primary	25	No	No	Driver and right-front-seat occupants	Primary	25	No	No	Yes
Massachusetts	No	< Age 5 or < 41 lbs	Primary	25	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Secondary	25	No	No	Yes
Michigan	No	< Age 4	Primary	10	No	No	Driver, all front-seat occupants, age 4-15 in the rear seat.	Primary	25	No	No	Yes
Minnesota	No	< Age 4	Primary	50	No	No	Driver, all front-seat occupants, age 4-10 in the rear seat.	Secondary	25	No	No	No
Mississippi	No	< Age 4	Primary	25	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	25	No	No	No
Missouri	Yes 8/28/06	< Age 8 and < 80 lbs and < 57"	Primary	50	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	10	No	No	Yes
Montana	Yes 10/1/03	< Age 6 and < 60 lbs	Secondary	100	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Secondary	20	No	No	No
Nebraska	Yes 7/1/02	< Age 6	Primary	25	Yes	No	Driver and front-seat occupants; drivers and all occupants if driven by provisional licensee	Secondary	25	No	No	Yes
Nevada	Yes 6/1/04	< Age 6 and < 61 lbs	Primary	500	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Secondary	25	unk	unk	Yes
New Hampshire	Yes 1/1/04	< Age 6 and < 55"	Primary	25	Yes	No	No requirements for drivers or occupants 18 or older to be restrained.	na	0	na	na	No
New Jersey	Yes 12/1/01	< Age 8 and < 80 lbs	Primary	100	Yes	Yes	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	50	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Mexico	Yes 6/17/05	< Age 6 or < 60 lbs	Primary	5	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	25	unk	unk	Yes

* Effective date of original booster seat law.

Table 1 – Basic Provisions of State Child Restraint and Seat Belt Laws (as of July 1, 2007).

State	Child Restraint Law						Seat Belt Law					"Pickup" Provisions
	"Booster" Law *	Child Restraint/Booster Required	Enforced	Fine	Points		Required to be restrained	Enforced	Fine	Points		
					License	Insurance				License	Insurance	
New York	Yes 3/1/05	< Age 7	Primary	21	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	20	No	No	Yes
North Carolina	Yes 1/1/05	< Age 8 and < 80 lbs	Primary	25	Yes	No	Driver and all occupants	Conditional	0	No	No	Yes
North Dakota	Yes 8/1/05	< Age 7 unless > 79 lbs and > 56"	Primary	25	Yes	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	20	unk	unk	No
Ohio	No	< Age 4 or < 40 lbs	Conditional	25	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	30	No	No	Yes
Oklahoma	Yes 3/31/04	< Age 6	Primary	50	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	20	No	No	No
Oregon	Yes 6/28/01	< Age 8 and < 57"	Primary	77	Yes	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	77	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	Yes 2/21/03	< Age 8 and < 80 lbs and < 57"	Conditional	100	No	No	Drivers, all front-seat occupants, less than 18 in the rear seat.	Secondary	10	No	No	Yes
Rhode Island	Yes 7/9/01	< Age 7 and < 80 lbs and < 54"	Primary	75	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Secondary	75	No	No	Yes
South Carolina	Yes 7/1/01	< Age 6 and < 80 lbs	Primary	150	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	25	No	No	Yes
South Dakota	No	< Age 5 and < 40 lbs	Primary	20	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	20	No	No	No
Tennessee	Yes 7/1/04	< Age 9 and < 57"	Primary	50	No	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Primary	50	No	No	Yes
Texas	No	< Age 5 and < 36"	Primary	200	No	No	Drivers, all front-seat occupants, less than 17 in the rear seat.	Primary	50	No	No	Yes
Utah	No	< Age 5	Primary	45	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Secondary	45	No	No	Yes
Vermont	Yes 1/1/04	< Age 8	Primary	25	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Secondary	25	unk	unk	No
Virginia	Yes 7/1//02	< Age 8	Primary	50	Yes	No	Driver and front-seat occupants	Secondary	25	No	No	Yes
Washington	Yes 7/1/02	< Age 8 and < 57"	Primary	86	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Primary	37	No	No	No
West Virginia	Yes 7/20/05	< Age 8 and < 57"	Primary	20	No	No	Drivers, all front-seat occupants, less than 18 in the rear seat.	Secondary	25	No	No	No

* Effective date of original booster seat law.

Table 1 – Basic Provisions of State Child Restraint and Seat Belt Laws (as of July 1, 2007).

State	Child Restraint Law						Seat Belt Law					"Pickup" Provisions
	"Booster" Law *	Child Restraint/Booster Required	Enforced	Fine	Points		Required to be restrained	Enforced	Fine	Points		
					License	Insurance				License	Insurance	
Wisconsin	Yes 6/1/05	< Age 8 and < 80 lbs and < 57"	Primary	75	No	No	Driver and all front-seat occupants and occupants of rear seats with lap and shoulder belts.	Secondary	10	No	No	Yes
Wyoming	Yes 7/1/03	< Age 9 and < 81 lbs	Primary	60	No	No	Driver and all occupants	Secondary	25	No	No	No

* Effective date of original booster seat law.

3.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The inventory of State child restraint laws provided a historical perspective of progress in booster seat law enactment over the past 5 years. The task activity also highlighted the wide variation across States in the features of these booster seat laws. This information provided a foundation for explaining booster seat use rates uncovered during the literature review, and for comparing booster seat use rates in States with and without booster laws. Low booster seat use among 4- to 8-year-old children may be explained by lack of booster seat laws, by laws which make a violation a secondary offense, and by laws which fail to reach best practices. However, booster seat laws may be just one factor that contributes to booster seat use or nonuse. The literature review was conducted to provide an up-to-date picture of the booster seat use rates in the Nation; describe the effectiveness of booster seat laws; and to provide a better understanding of the parental/caregiver characteristics that contribute to inconsistent booster seat use among this age group. Booster seat use studies included observational surveys, crash data analyses, telephone surveys, and focus group sessions. The review focused primarily on studies conducted during the past 5 years.

3.2.1 Observational Surveys

Within the past 5 years, observational studies on booster seat use have been conducted describing nationwide booster seat use and statewide booster seat use, employing probability-based sampling techniques.[2] Studies looking at booster seat use across multiple States using convenience sampling techniques have also been conducted. Details of seven observational booster seat use studies are provided below.

The most recent NHTSA National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) was conducted in the summer of 2006 across the United States. The probability-based survey was based on observations of children in vehicles. The survey found that 41% of children ages 4 to 8 were in a booster seat (25% in a high-backed booster and 16% in a backless booster). For the remaining children in this age group, 17% were in child safety seats, 33% were in seat belts, and 9% were unrestrained (Glassbrenner and Ye, 2007).

Another recent NHTSA-sponsored study observed booster-seat-age children arriving at elementary schools in four cities. The study used a convenience sample to evaluate the effects of school-based booster seat use education programs in elementary schools. The post-intervention data were collected in May 2006 at 25 schools in 4 cities (Wilmington, DE, San Diego, CA, Chicago, IL, and Charleston, SC). Observations of restraint use were made on 11,607 children between age 4 and 8 in over 8,903 vehicles. Twenty percent of these children were found in booster seats (ThinkFirst National Prevention Foundation, 2007).

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[2] A probability-based survey is based on observations across a random sample of roadway design and operational conditions within a particular geographic cluster or census tract. This approach allows results to be generalized to areas not included in the sample, to yield a National estimate of restraint use. By comparison, a convenience-based survey relies on observations at sites that are chosen because they exhibit a high frequency of a particular target population (e.g., a parking lot outside a destination for drivers with toddlers or booster-seat-age children). A convenience sample may not yield statistically-representative data that can be projected to areas not included in the survey.

A recent study by Vanderbilt University researchers evaluated the effects of Tennessee's enhanced child restraint law (enacted in July 2005) covering new requirements for 4- to 8-year-olds (Gunn, Phillippi, & Cooper, 2007). Pre- and post-law observation data were collected at 34 sites (after-school programs and elementary schools) in 3 urban counties in the State, using a convenience sample. The survey found a significant increase in booster seat use among this age group from pre-law (29%) to post-law (39%) periods. The survey observed 1,247 children ages 4 to 8 (618 in the post-law period).

In the summer of 2004, a large-scale booster seat use observation survey was conducted in Michigan with a probability-based sample of over 3,400 children 4 to 8 years old. Observations were made at intersections and fast-food restaurants in 31 counties which were also used for the annual statewide seat belt use observation study. Researchers from the University of Michigan found 8.6% of these children restrained in booster seats and 5.1% in child safety seats. This State did not have a booster seat law; however it did have a primary seat belt law (Eby, Bingham, Vivoda, & Ragunathan, 2005).

In the fall of 2002, a NHTSA-sponsored child restraint system use and misuse observational study looked at children less than 80 pounds at 75 sites in 6 States (Decina, Lococo, & Block, 2005). A convenience sample of over 4,000 vehicles with these young children was obtained, largely at shopping centers. Of the 2,571 children ages 4 through 8, 22.4% were in booster seats and 19% were in child safety seats (Decina & Lococo, 2004). Additional analyses from the study revealed that child safety seat and booster seat usage decreased for each 1-year increase in age beyond age 4 (i.e., 46.1% of children age 5; 29.7% of children age 6; 17% of children age 7; and 6.3% of children age 8).

Between May and August 2003, Washington State University's Division of Government Studies and Services conducted a booster seat use observational survey. They found 49% of children 4 to 8 years of age in a booster seat (weighted Statewide sample of 890), and 44.7% of children between 40 and 80 pounds in a booster seat (weighted Statewide sample of 823). Booster seat use by minorities was approximately 10% lower than that of Whites. The probability-based sampling design provided an accurate estimate of statewide safety restraint usage (Stehr & Lovrich, 2003). At the time this study was conducted, booster seats were mandatory for children weighing between 40 and 60 pounds or younger than 6 years of age.

In an earlier study conducted in Washington between February and April 2000, researchers at the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center/University of Washington observed a convenience sample of children traveling in vehicles as they left child care centers and elementary schools. Of the 1,539 children eligible for booster-seat use based on best practices for age and weight (e.g., 40 to 80 pounds, and/or between ages 4 and 8), only 21.3% were using booster seats. In this age group, use of booster seats decreased with increases in age. Six-year-old children were half as likely to be restrained using a booster seat relative to 4-year-old children. Eight-year-old children were rarely restrained in a booster seat (Ebel, Koepsell, Bennett, & Rivara, 2003). At the time this study was conducted, Washington did not have a booster seat law.

3.2.2 Crash Data Analyses

The most recent Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data from 2004 showed that of the 334 children ages 4 to 8 who were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes, 47% were unrestrained (NHTSA, 2005). Another FARS report looked at trends over a 5-year period from 1998 through 2002. For single-vehicle fatality crashes involving children in this age group, 28.8% of these unrestrained children did not survive. In multiple-vehicle fatality crashes involving children in this age group, 26.9% of these unrestrained children did not survive (Starnes, 2003).

The Center for Injury Research and Prevention (CIRP) at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia has collected information on more than 300,000 crashes involving over 350,000 children since 1997. The most recently published study showed that 45% of children age 4 to 8 involved in crashes were in child restraints (e.g., child safety seats, belt-positioning boosters, or shield boosters). A further breakdown of the data showed that 27% of children ages 4 to 8 were restrained using belt-positioning boosters (Partners for Child Passenger Safety, 2005).

CIRP also compared injury risk and patterns of injury for children age 4 to 8 restrained in belt-positioning boosters compared to those using seat belts alone. The analysis examined 3,616 crashes between December 1998 and May 2002 involving 4,243 children. Eighty percent of these children were either in a belt-positioning booster or a vehicle seat belt. The adjusted risk of injury for this age group was reduced by 59% when children were restrained with the use of belt-positioning boosters when compared to the use of adult seat belts alone. The children in seat belts alone had injuries to every body region (Durbin, Elliott, & Winston, 2003).

3.2.3 Telephone Surveys

The Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey is a biennial national telephone survey on occupant protection issues sponsored by the NHTSA. The 2003 survey used two questionnaires, each administered to a randomly selected sample of approximately 6,000 people 16 or older.

In the most recent MVOSS survey (early 2003), 60% of participants with children younger than 9 reported that the (referent) child used a child safety seat all the time; and 29% of participants reported the child used a seat belt all the time. Most children age 6 through 8 discontinued using a child safety seat or booster seat. Although booster seats are recommended for most children 4 through 8, the survey found only 21% of children in that age range using them and another 19% using forward-facing child safety seats (Boyle & Vanderwolf, 2005).

The 2003 MVOSS survey asked drivers about the type of child safety seat or booster seat being used by age (Boyle & Vanderwolf, 2005). The following percentages of booster seat use by age were obtained by participants with children younger than 9 who reported that on occasion a child safety seat or booster seat was being used:

- Children younger than age 2 = 10%
- Age 2 = 8%
- Age 3 = 12%
- Age 4 = 29%
- Age 5 = 32%
- Age 6 = 27%
- Age 7 = 15%
- Age 8 = 9%

Booster seat use by weight of the child was also obtained in this survey, as follows:

- Less that 20 pounds = 7%
- 20 to 29 pounds = 5%
- 30 to 39 pounds = 15%
- 40 to 60 pounds = 25%
- 61 or more pounds = 9%

3.2.4 Focus Group Surveys and Interviews

In the late 1990s, CIRP (formerly Partners for Child Passenger Safety) examined premature graduation, which refers to moving children into adult seat belts before they fit properly, putting them at greater risk for injury. Focus groups and telephone interviews were conducted with parents/caregivers of young children in New Jersey and Pennsylvania to explore the nature and causes of premature graduation. Most parents/caregivers were aware that a booster seat was the appropriate restraint to use when a child outgrew a child safety seat, and many reported that they actually had used a booster seat for a short time before moving the child to an adult seat belt. Differences in knowledge and risk perception were found between parents/caregivers who used booster seats and parents who used seat belts for their children. Parents/caregivers using booster seats were generally more aware of child restraint issues (e.g., legislation, risks, best practices), were more active in seeking information, more concerned about the potential of injury, and less confident about their ability to sufficiently protect their children from injury, than those who used seat belts to restrain children. Parents/caregivers indicated that they did not always restrain children or use restraints properly because: the child was too big for a child restraint; they were only traveling a short distance; the child protested and refused to use the seat; and/or the seat was not available (Winston, Moll, Durbin, & Kassam-Adams, 2001).

Other research in the late 1990s sought to identify reasons for nonuse of booster seats by interviewing a subset of drivers from an observation study of booster-seat-age children in the Washington. Approximately 46% of respondents felt their child was large enough to stop using a booster; about 21% intended to use the booster seat but had not; about 11% reported problems with installing the booster seat in the vehicle or putting the child in the seat; 7% had not considered purchasing a booster seat; and 4% said their child disliked the booster seat (Ramsey, Simpson, & Rivara, 2000).

Recent focus group work with State and local law enforcement officers in three States (Colorado, Maine, and Maryland) that had recently passed booster seat legislation found that officers strongly supported the use of booster seats and the legal requirements mandating booster seat use. However, the officers reported that the complexity of CPS guidelines was a barrier to their use and to enforcement of booster seat laws. They indicated that they would enforce the law on a case-by-case basis. Parents/caregivers making an effort to do the right thing would generally be provided with education, in lieu of ticketing for violations. Commitment from department heads would also influence enforcement activity. Participants recommended that

booster seat citations be included in NHTSA's *Click It or Ticket* campaigns. They stated that simpler booster seat laws and stiffer penalties (application of points and higher fines) would increase compliance (Raymond, Seifert, Golembiewski, & Knoblauch, 2004).

3.2.5 Summary of Literature Review

While the percentage of appropriately restrained children age 4 to 8 varies across observation studies, one consistent behavior pattern is that the older the child, the less likely a booster seat will be used.

Driver seat belt use has a positive influence on children's restraint use (Decina & Lococo, 2004). The recent Michigan study found that children riding with belted drivers were restrained in booster seats about 10% of the time, while those riding with unbelted drivers were restrained in booster seats 1 to 2% of the time (Eby et al., 2005). Children in minority populations and children being transported by older drivers were also less likely to be using booster seats (Stehr & Lovrich, 2003; Decina, Lococo, & Block, 2005; Eby et al., 2005; ThinkFirst National Prevention Foundation, 2007).

The review of quantitative and qualitative research studies uncovered differences between users and nonusers of booster seats that related to risk perception, knowledge of the laws, understanding of how booster seats work, and parenting skills. Factors that have been shown to contribute to parents'/caregivers' nonuse of booster seats for their young children include:

- A disconnect between recommended and evidence-based best practices and booster seat laws, and parent/caregiver reliance on State laws to guide safe practices;
- Lack of understanding about best practices for child passenger safety;
- Underestimation of the risk of being involved in a crash;
- Lack of understanding of the physics involved in a crash and the injury consequences;
- Misperception that a child is big enough for a vehicle seat belt (and underestimation of the injury prevention potential of an adult seat belt for a small child);
- Lack of understanding about the safety benefits of booster seats;
- Misperception that a child is too big for a booster seat;
- Inconvenience of using a booster seat or switching the booster between two vehicles;
- Child's discomfort or resistance in using the booster seat;
- Cost or accessibility of a booster seat prohibits its use;
- Parent's/caregiver's perception that they won't get caught or that the penalties are minor or nonexistent for not using a booster seat; and

- Situational circumstances may preclude the use of booster seats (e.g., extra occupants in the vehicle).

Interventions that have been effective in increasing booster seat use were also reviewed. One meta-analysis study of booster seat intervention programs found that combining education with either incentives to acquire booster seats (e.g., discount coupons) or distribution of free booster seats increased booster seat use. There is also some evidence that legislation has a beneficial effect on the use of booster seats (Ehiri, King, Ejere, & Mouzon, 2006). Other studies on the impact of legislation have also shown increases in booster seat use after implementation of booster seat laws (Gunn, Phillippi, & Cooper, 2007; Winston, Kallan, Elliott, Xie, & Durbin, 2007; NHTSA, 2007).

Effective messaging for booster seat intervention programs has been a topic of recent study by Dr. Will from Eastern Virginia Medical School and Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters. Will (2005) states that most caregivers possess an "immunity fallacy," which is a reduced perception of risk for motor vehicle injury to their children. Because of their false perception that driving is not risky, they believe that their young children are safe enough using the adult seat belt. As a consequence, caregivers who encounter traditionally designed booster seat intervention messages (i.e., those which are primarily informational) don't see a need for corrective action and therefore tune out the message. According to Will, for maximum behavioral success, injury prevention messages must shock and surprise parents/caregivers into paying attention to something they would normally dismiss as unimportant. Properly designed fear appeals have two key elements: they must convince people that there is a high probability for the danger, and they must focus on the minimal effort required to adopt the recommended precaution. Effective messaging for child passenger safety must simultaneously inform, persuade, arouse alarm, evoke high emotion, create feelings of vulnerability, and instill in parents/caregivers a high sense of efficacy for protecting their children (Will, 2005).

Will (2005) notes that gore is not necessary for a properly designed fear appeal message. Instead, occupant protection messaging should include crash test footage that portrays the power of crash forces, and fear-evoking photo images of the types of injuries that may be sustained in crashes. In research sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control, a 6-minute video ("Boost 'Em In The Back Seat!") using a novel threat-appeal approach (without gore) was used to deliver preventative messages about the importance of booster seat and rear-seat use to parents. The video intervention program was piloted at two after-school care centers via an interrupted time series design with two control sites for comparison (Will, Sabo, & Porter, 2007). Study findings indicated that, compared to baseline and control assessments, the treatment group's child passenger safety knowledge, risk-reduction attitudes, perception of fear and efficacy, and behavioral intentions related to booster seat use and back seat use increased significantly from pre- to post-test. Trend analyses confirmed significant increases in overall observed restraint use and booster seat use following exposure to the intervention video compared to baseline and control sites.

The literature review uncovered barriers to the enforcement of booster seat laws. Based on the findings from focus groups with law enforcement officers, there is a preference to educate as opposed to enforce. Providing officers with education on the safety benefits of booster seats and a better understanding the child restraint laws; enacting stronger booster seat laws; and commitment from top management might promote more enforcement of these laws.

3.3 OBSERVATIONAL STUDY OF THE IMACT OF A BOOSTER SEAT LAW

While the literature search in the last task found several studies that evaluated the effects of child restraint laws on child passenger restraint use, only one observational study (Gunn, Phillippi, & Cooper, 2007) and one crash data study (Winston et al., 2007) were identified that examined the effects of booster seat laws on booster seat use. The observational study conducted in this project shed more light on the influence of booster seat law enactment on booster seat use.

In this task, observations of booster seat use and nonuse were conducted in a State with a newly enacted booster seat law (Wisconsin) and in a neighboring comparison State with no booster seat law (Michigan). Observations were made in May 2006 (pre-law) and in September 2006 (post-law). Wisconsin's law was enacted on June 1, 2006. A significant improvement (48.6% to 57.7%) in booster seat and child safety seat use for children age 4 to 8 was found in Wisconsin after the booster seat law was passed. Even though there was improvement (41.6% to 47.5%) in booster seat and child safety seat use in Michigan, it was not statistically significant. More details of the study findings are presented below.

Overall, driver and vehicle characteristics (e.g., percentage of female versus male, race, vehicle types, and number of occupants) were similar in Wisconsin and Michigan during the pre- and post-intervention periods.

Although booster seat use among children 4 to 8 increased from 40 to 45.9% in Wisconsin and from 38.6 to 40.2% in Michigan during this same period, these increases were not statistically significant (See Table 2). However, during the pre- and post- booster seat law period, the overall patterns of restraint use (seat belt, child safety seat, booster, and unrestrained) for children 4 to 8 changed significantly in Wisconsin ($p<.02$) and in Michigan ($p<.01$). In both States, the number of children in child safety seats and booster seats increased, and the number of children in seat belts decreased. However, in Wisconsin, the number of unrestrained children remained relatively stable, while the number in Michigan increased.

Table 2. Restraint Use for Booster-Seat-Age Children.

Restraint Type	**Wisconsin**		**Michigan**	
	Pre N=407	Post N=355	Pre N=472	Post N=465
Seat Belt	30.7%	21.1%	45.6%	35.7%
Child Safety Seat	8.6%	11.8%	3.0%	7.3%
Booster	40.0%	45.9%	38.6%	40.2%
Unrestrained	20.6%	21.1%	12.9%	16.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Since there is a large variation in children's sizes between 4 and 8, smaller children would be appropriately restrained in child safety seats with an internal harness, while larger children would be appropriately restrained in booster seats. There is also some variation in upper weight limits for forward-facing child safety seats with internal harnesses (e.g., from 40 to 80 pounds), so children 40 pounds and over may still be appropriately restrained in a child safety

seat. A chi-square test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference from the pre- to post- booster law period in the number of children who were appropriately restrained, without regard to the type of child restraint system. Thus, an appropriately restrained child could be riding in a booster seat or in a child safety seat. In Wisconsin, significantly more children were appropriately restrained from before to after the law ($p<.02$) while the results for Michigan were not significant. The combination of child safety seat and booster seat use in Wisconsin showed an increase of 9.1 percentage points (48.6% to 57.7%) and the same combination yielded an increase in Michigan of 5.9 percentage points (41.6% to 47.5 %) (See Figure 2).

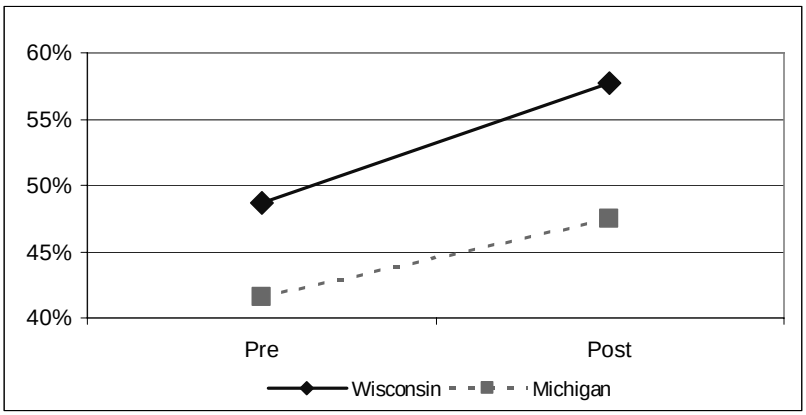

Figure 2. Children Age 4 to 8 Appropriately Restrained in Child Safety Seats or Booster Seats.

There was also a trend toward fewer children inappropriately restrained for their age (e.g., in seat belts or completely unrestrained) as a consequence of the booster law. In Wisconsin, the number of children in seat belts and the number of children who were completely unrestrained decreased by 9.1 percentage points (51.3% before the law; 42.2% after the law). In Michigan, during this same period, the number of children in seat belts and the number of children who were unrestrained decreased by 6 percentage points (58.5% before the law; 52.5% after the law).

For both States, over one-half of the booster seats were the backless type in the pre- and post-intervention periods. Over one-third of the booster seats were belt-positioning high back models in the pre- and post-intervention periods. About 10% were combination seats and only about 2% were shield boosters in each period.

These findings offer the first indications that Wisconsin's booster seat law had the effect of increasing child restraint system use (child safety seat or booster seats) for children between ages 4 and 8. However, this study had limitations because it used a convenience sample. While not necessarily representative of the State, the study findings showed a significant change in the direction of safer practices from pre- to post- booster seat law enactment.

It can be inferred that the booster seat law motivated parents and caregivers to move their children into a restraint that was appropriate for the child's age and weight. Since there was no concomitant change in the comparison State from pre- to post-intervention (no child booster seat

law was implemented in Michigan), it appears that the increase in appropriately restrained children in Wisconsin was the result of the new booster seat law.

Findings from the observation study were included as a discussion topic in the subsequent focus groups conducted in this project. Discussion about the effects of booster seat laws on improving booster seat use in communities fueled a lively discussion with several parents/caregivers in the cities. In addition, many of the law enforcement officers were quite surprised that enactment of a booster seat law without any enforcement in place actually changed behavior. Discussions about increasing booster seat use through increased enforcement of booster laws ensued. Details of the focus group activity follow below.

3.4 FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

The literature review provided evidence that booster seat use increases when a booster seat law is enacted. The booster seat observational study conducted in this project confirmed this finding. However, the observational study also showed that the law wasn't 100% effective. Three months after the primary law covering children age 4 to 8 had been in place in Wisconsin, 21% of the booster-seat-age children were riding unrestrained and another 21% were inappropriately restrained in adult seat belts.

Focus groups were conducted with parents/caregivers of booster-age children to learn why parents/caregivers don't always restrain their children in booster seats and what would motivate them to do so. Focus groups were held with law enforcement officers to learn what the barriers are to enforcing booster seat laws, and what strategies would be effective in removing these barriers.

Parents/caregivers generally confirmed the reasons for not using booster seats that were highlighted in the literature review: lack of understanding of the laws and best practices for restraining their children, underestimation of the risk involved when using seat belts instead of booster seats, indulgent parenting when their children resist using booster seats, and low threat of being ticketed for failure to comply (with the exception of participants from California). A new reason for not using booster seats was identified by the parents/caregivers in this project. There is a perception that because booster seats wobble, they are unsafe. Therefore, many caregivers believe that their children are safer when restrained in an adult seat belt. Although the strategies they recommended for increasing booster seat use were not necessarily new, the concept that messaging should focus of the risk of injury and death to their children, using visual methods (crash tests with dummies, actual crash pictures, and testimonials by parents whose children had been injured in a crash because they were inappropriately restrained) supported the idea that fear appeals are acceptable to parents, and would motivate them to change their behavior.

Although law enforcement officers confirmed that secondary child restraint laws are a barrier to their enforcement, they also provided new information about the institutional barriers to the enforcement of booster seat laws. These institutional barriers are that (1) the level of understanding about appropriate restraint for age and weight of a child by most officers precludes them from stopping drivers, (2) there is a lack of funding and a lack of commitment in many departments for child restraint law enforcement activities, and (3) lenient judges dismiss

child restraint law violation cases in many States, which reduces the motivation of law enforcement officers to ticket for these violations. Like the parents/caregivers, they recommended that educational messages provide visual and testimonial evidence of the risks of injury for inappropriately restrained children. They also recommended that booster seat manufacturers and retailers, and pediatricians should be encouraged to inform the public about the laws and injury risks from non-compliance.

More detail is presented below from the focus groups about the barriers to booster seat use, the barriers to enforcing the laws, and strategies to improve the effectiveness of booster seat laws.

3.4.1 Focus Groups with Law Enforcement Personnel

Focus groups with law enforcement personnel included both certified child passenger safety (CPS) officers and those charged with enforcing the laws but having no special training in the subject. A summary of topics discussed with these officers follows. A sample of comments from the officers that best represents the tone in the sessions is also included. A code for location of the focus group session (R=Richmond, P = Pittsburgh, C = Chicago, and S = Sacramento) follows each comment.

3.4.1.1 Barriers to Parent/Caregiver Use of Booster Seats

Based on their interactions with drivers caught in violation of booster seat laws, law enforcement officers were asked why parents/caregivers don't use booster seats (or don't use them properly) to restrain their 4- to 8-year-old passengers. Officers identified the following barriers that stand in the way of full-time and appropriate use of child booster seats among the public. These re-confirm the findings from the literature review.

- Public's ignorance of the child safety laws. Officers indicated that parents/caregivers don't know the specifics of the child passenger safety laws, and how the law applies to their children. Parents/caregivers tell officers that the law does not apply to their children because of their size. Officers also use size of child to check for child restraint law violations. Some will interview the child (e.g., how old are you?) as opposed to the parent/caregiver to ensure more honest answers.

  The most common excuse I've heard is that they don't know the law. P

- Public's ignorance about proper use of booster seats. According to the officers, many parents don't know how to use booster seats properly. A common error is to place the shoulder belt behind the child.

  Parents have a misconception that they can use a booster seat just with a lap belt. That defeats the purpose. The point of making them sit higher is so that the shoulder belt can be used. C

A lot of what you do with booster seats is education. You really have to take the time to sit down with parents and tell them why a BPB (belt positioning booster) isn't independently belted to the seat. P

- Public's failure to recognize the degree of risk to themselves and the unrestrained child. The officers stated that there is a strong correlation between adult use of seat belts and having children properly belted in booster seats.

  If Mom and Dad aren't buckled up, the child's most likely not buckled up either. R

  Sometimes, the kids get mixed signals. With Mom, you have to buckle up. With Dad, you don't. R

- Parents/caregivers are too permissive, when their children complain about using booster seats. Parents/caregivers tell the officers during traffic stops that children hate booster seats and refuse to stay in them. Law enforcement officers are also told by parents/caregivers that the child was in the seat when the trip started but somehow escaped from it. These excuses irritate the officers the most.

  How many times do we in enforcement hear the excuses… they won't stay in the seat, they cry. My question is who is the child and who is the parent? R

  I don't know how many parents say can you talk to my son. He won't stay in his seat. That's ridiculous! Who cares what (the child) likes? You gotta be a parent. P

  I have one message for you: be the parent. If you had put (the child) in it from the beginning and ignored the crying, you wouldn't have a problem now. P

  They say it's a baby seat and that my kid puts up a fuss because his friends are not in it. C

- Booster seats are complicated. Officers hear from parents/caregivers that the seats are too complicated, difficult to move from one vehicle to the next, etc. However, the officers believe that the real problem is not the installation of the seats but, how the children are secured in the seats (e.g., the placement of the shoulder belt.)

- Booster seats are too expensive. The officers were aware that booster seats are generally not expensive, far less so than child safety seats; and that there are many programs in place to provide poor families with free or inexpensive booster sets.

  I issue most of my child seat tickets in the poorest areas of the city (of Richmond). When they say they can't afford it, they quite honestly can't. But, the low-income program takes that excuse away. R

- Other common excuses. The officers reported hearing all of the common excuses, including: “it’s a short trip,” “seat left in other car,” I’m not the usual driver,” or “child was asleep so I laid him down in the back seat.”

3.4.1.2. Barriers to the Enforcement of Booster Seat Laws

The law enforcement officers stated that child safety seat and seat belt laws are strongly enforced. However, booster seat laws are not rigorously enforced. The participants expressed that although they would like to enforce these booster seat laws, they were more comfortable educating drivers and caregivers who were not following booster seat laws than they were in punishing them.

Officers identified four institutional barriers to consistently enforcing booster seat laws. These included:

- Judges are too lenient. Officers stated that judges are not familiar with the child restraint laws and are too quick to dismiss tickets for this offense.

  Most justices don't know much about restraints. So, it's easier for them to wave that fine. P

- Shortage of knowledgeable police on the subject of child restraints and booster seats. The participants stated that often, officers do not feel that they are qualified to write a ticket or offer education because they don't feel like they know enough about child restraint systems, including booster seats and proper use/installation.

  If there is a question about whether the seat is in properly, most of us won't deal with that. S

  Who is going to define "properly?" The average patrolman doesn't know enough about child seats to argue before a judge about it, so they don't give tickets. R

  A lot of them never issue child restraint tickets because they don't have the knowledge for doing it. The driver will say, since I don't have it in properly, can you show me how to put it in. And, they can't! R

  We have 34 officers in the department. Only about eight of them know the ins and outs of seat belts. P

- Lack of funding for police to enforce booster seat laws.

  A lot of our communities are underfunded for this and, therefore, understaffed. C

- Lack of police focus.

  We're worried about the robberies and the drugs. We would love to put our resources (into enforcing booster seat laws) but we can't. C

  We don't go out in the street every day thinking "O.K. Child safety seats! We're looking for the things that cause accidents like speeding and running red lights. Half the time, we can't even see if there is a child in the car unless we stop them for something else. S

Two situational factors were identified by officers as barriers to enforcing booster laws. These include:

- Violations are difficult to spot due to less than ideal sight lines.

  Tinted windows make it hard. R

  Sometimes I can't even tell if there is a kid in the car. R

- Probable financial impact on some families. Officers stated that they try to give consideration to situational circumstances. Most say that they will write a ticket regardless of any circumstance because their job is to protect children.

  Are you trying to do safety for the kid? Or, are you trying to slam them for the violation, even when they don't have the money. R

  If I see that they have made an attempt and they're trying, my emphasis is on the educational aspect rather than on penalizing them. S

  If that person (one with six unrestrained children) is clearly not making an effort to restrain their six kids, then there is no doubt in my mind that they are going to get six tickets. R

  With low-income drivers, I write the ticket to get them in (to court). Then, I make arrangements to get them free seats so that they don't have to pay the fine. P

  I just wrote out one woman for six tags. I told her to go appeal it, but at least I was covered. She'll have to pay for one ticket. They'll chew her out for the rest of them. P

  A very tall 7-year old in a booster seat, his head is going to come above the seat. If there is not a headrest behind him, then he shouldn't be in the booster. There are times you have to use some discretion in applying the law. P

  Allowances need to be made for children who are big for their ages and don't fit comfortably in a booster. P

3.4.1.3 Perceived Adequacy of Booster Seat Laws

Although the law enforcement officers represented States with differing booster seat laws and levels of punishment, there was general agreement that (1) booster seat laws should be primary; (2) fines should be high; and (3) punishment should include points assessed against the license. Officers from California were more satisfied with their laws than officers from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Illinois.

> *Make it primary as opposed to secondary. Take the money that brings in and use it to buy more seats for those who can't afford it. P*

3.4.1.4 Educational Messages to Increase Booster Seat Use

Participants were presented with four "concept statements," each focusing on an "argument" for convincing parents and other caregivers to use booster seats properly and consistently. These concept statements are presented in Appendix D. The four concepts focused on the:

- RISKS associated with failure to restrain the child;
- threat of ENFORCEMENT for failure to restrain;
- EASE of installing and using booster seats; and
- DUTY of a parent to properly protect a child from harm.

Participants were invited to read all the statements and to put them in an order of preference according to their effectiveness in encouraging booster seat use.

The law enforcement groups settled on two message concepts that they perceived to have equal merit and great power when combined, i.e. enforcement and duty. The ease concept was not rated high; it was a non-issue. This is because using a booster seat properly was not considered difficult, especially when compared to using child safety seats properly.

> *Even if you're stupid or irresponsible, you understand getting a ticket. S*

> *Some parents could care less about their kids. P*

> *(Enforcement) might not stop everybody, but it will bet a lot of them to pay attention. R*

In their earlier discussions, the officers expressed some skepticism about how effectively current laws are enforced. But enforcement to these participants was largely a matter of using enforcement to educate rather than punish.

> *We need to educate them first. Educate instead of incarcerate. P*

> *I truly believe in education combined with enforcement. Educate them first. Then, if they don't follow through, drop the hammer and fully enforce. R*

Officers were asked whether a potential public information and educational (PI&E) campaign should focus entirely on enforcement of the booster seat laws. The moderator offered *Click It or Ticket* as a model for such a campaign. Based on the officers' comments, an enforcement-only focus was not recommended. Rather, the officers indicated that an appeal should first be made to the desire of parents to keep their children safe. Officers sense that most parents want to do the right thing, but they don't recognize the risk to their children by allowing them to ride unrestrained or restrained by seat belts. So parents need to be educated about the consequences of failure in their duty and how they should comply with their duty.

Enforcement is secondary. Your kids are going to get hurt and it's the law. C

Enforcement might produce short-term compliance. But long term, it's going to be the self-interest and protecting the child. C

If you run enforcement checks at a school drop-off zone, you'll see dramatic improvement. But, the improvement will only last a few months and creep up again if you slack off the enforcement. S

If I were going to try to change somebody's behavior, this (Duty) is how I would do it. C

Officers were comfortable with showing graphic evidence of the risks involved in non-compliance, but felt that this alone would not be sufficient persuasion.

If people think about these risks a little bit more, they're going to go get that booster seat. R

Reminding them that injuries can occur even at low speed is a very good point. R

That's right. People think that if they don't speed, they're safe. But, these things happen at slow speeds. R

This scared me. If I read this or saw this, there is no question that it would affect my behavior. S

According to the participants, enforcement should be the ultimate threat aimed at those who will not recognize and do what is right. The message sequence according to the officers should be:

1. Do the right thing as a parent by properly protecting your child in a booster seat because…
2. Failure to do that can result in terrible consequences and…
3. As law enforcement officers, we are here to guide you in the right direction. Ultimately though…
4. The law is the law and we will enforce it.

3.4.1.7 Strategies Recommended by Law Enforcement

Seven strategies were offered by law enforcement officers to increase booster seat use.

1. An educational emphasis aimed at the children themselves, especially grades K-3.

   Educate the kids in grade school. They'll have an impact on their families. I think that is especially true with the Spanish families. C

   How about a poster in every daycare center? C

   Children are impressionable. Get into the schools so the kids will tell Mommy and Daddy to put them in the seat. R

   Go into the schools, talk to the students directly and hand out the brochures to go home to their parents. Have the parents sign something and bring it back that they read it. P

2. More publicity with an emphasis on the risk issue. There is a need to graphically demonstrate the consequences of not using a booster seat. Posters (showing the types of booster seats and their proper usage in a simple and visually clear design) should be placed in public buildings and other places where parents gather (e.g., pediatrician offices).

   A lot of parents don't know what can happen to their kids. You have to use tough love, to shock them. C

   We need videos showing crash dummies, to show just how serious this is. C

   We (the police) should all have pictures of children that have been crashed to show when we stop someone for this offense. C

   You need that billboard on the highway that shows a very small yellow tarp and a very small child that wasn't in a booster seat and got in an accident. You need that shock value. S

   People will complain and take offense when you show an actual accident scene. It would be just as effective to have the mother of a victim or near victim directly addressing the public. I lost my child because I was running behind that day. S

   How many posters do you ever see for (booster seats), even in the public aid office? C

3. Encourage booster seat manufacturers and retailers to do more to inform the public about the laws and the risks involved in not properly restraining their children.

   If I were a seat manufacturer, I would bombard the public about the law. C

I think more in-store reminders… Babies R Us, Wal-Mart… would be great for the parents and for the merchants. R

We should educate the sales people who are working where they sell the seats. We are getting people from Toys R Us and Babies R Us at the police seminars. P

4. Continue and augment booster seat give-aways to low income parents/caregivers.

   Ford did a program called "Boost America." They gave away thousands of seats. They had lines (of parents) wrapped around the parking lot wherever they went. CL

5. Make better use of the captive-audience and authority aspects of pediatrician offices with posters, leaflets and videos.

   Is there a way, on a large scale, to educate parents? (What about) a video in pediatrician offices? R

6. Persuade corporations to include booster seat information in their material and safety sessions.

   Big, private businesses, need to deal with their employees (on this topic) when they do their health and wellness training. P

7. Increased pressure to write tickets for restraints generally. An example is the Chief's Challenge which, police say, causes them to push hard.

3.4.2 Focus Groups with Parents/Caregivers

Participants were recruited to achieve a balance among those who routinely use booster seats and those who only occasionally or never use them. The objective was to develop a sense of (1) what parents/caregivers know about booster seats and laws in their States; (2) what barriers prevent compliance from occasional and non-users; (3) what motivates the regular booster seat user; and (4) what strategies may compel parents/caregivers to more consistently use booster seats. Personal comments are included. A code for location of the focus group session (R=Richmond, P = Pittsburgh, C = Chicago, and S = Sacramento) follows each comment, as well as a code for participant gender (F =female and M= male).

3.4.2.1 Knowledge of Booster Seats and Child Restraint Laws

Most participants knew about the various styles of booster seats, where to buy them, and how much they cost. Most knew that the purpose of booster seats was to provide a greater degree of safety over seat belts. Those who use the seats most often reported that the purpose was to ensure a proper, safe, and firm fit of the shoulder belt. Some of the grandparents who participated reported that they would use the seats if present in their sons' or daughters' vehicles, but would not otherwise obtain a booster seat.

Participants reported that booster seats were comparatively easy to install (as opposed to child safety seats) and could easily be transported from one vehicle to another. Participants generally regarded booster seats as inexpensive. It was also widely understood that seats were available free or discounted to the financially needy.

While parents/caregivers appeared to know about booster seats, they found the child restraint laws confusing. They generally knew that age, weight, and height played a role in determining which children should be in booster seats, but few of them could state the exact conditions with any confidence or precision.

> *It has to do with when the child is 40 pounds. You can be in the right age bracket but be too big or too small for the boosters. RF*

> *I think the recommendation is to stop using boosters at 8 years old. Though my seven-year-old only uses seat belts. She is very tall, so the shoulder belt rides too low when she is in a booster. RF*

> *It's something about 80 pounds or 8 years of age. CF*

> *It just changed. What is it? Twenty-five pounds and up for the booster? SM*

> *The information is not clear as to when and how long they should be in booster seats. RF*

> *I was confused when I bought mine because the box said 30 lbs. And, I had read somewhere that it was 40 lbs. So, I went online. Even there, I had a hard time coming up with a definitive answer. RF*

> *I didn't really know anything about the law until tonight. For me, it was a common sense safety decision. CM*

Nearly every participant had questions about when there might be exceptions to the law for their own children. Many asked how the law might apply to a child who is very large or very small for his or her age. Participants were also unsure about the penalties (fines, points) that applied in their States, which may also relate to non-compliance with the law.

3.4.2.2 Barriers to Full-Time Use of Booster Seats

Several themes emerged from the participants' discussions about what prevents full-time booster seat use, including: (1) child's dislike of seats; (2) failure to understand the importance of booster seats; (3) ignorance or lack of unawareness of risks; (4) perception that booster seat laws are not enforced; (5) situational factors; (6) perception that seats are not safe; (7) perception by parents that seats are uncomfortable for their children; and (8) difficulty fitting seats in the vehicle.

(1) Child's dislike of the seats. Participants frequently reported that their children rebel against being placed in the booster seats. They stated that 4- and 5-year-old children often release themselves from the seat simply because they are able to or because they want to move around the vehicle; and children age 6 or 7 often complain incessantly about being uncomfortable and feeling too much like a baby. Negative peer pressure was offered as a definite factor, particularly when the child reaches first grade. Some parents/caregivers stated that they just give up.

My daughter knows how to take the belt off and will. CF

She thought it was babyish. The day she turned 8, that was the end of it. PF

My grandkids were pretty much put off by the booster seats. They are hard and uncomfortable. As soon as they can get out of their booster seat, they get out. My three-year-old granddaughter tries to remove the seat from the car altogether. That's how much she hates it. RM

My son just wouldn't stay in it. As soon as I'd get him in it, he'd unbuckle the damned thing. So, I said the hell with it and just took it out of the car. RM

He carries on about it so much that it's easier to just buckle him in the adult seat belt. PF

My daughter doesn't like the booster seat. So, she will beat me to the car and get seated beside me in a seat belt. And I just say "whatever." CF

I put my 4-year old in a booster seat, but not my 7-year old. She's a little tall for it and just makes such a fuss! So, I put her in the seat belts. She's happy. She's comfortable. No screaming and yelling. RF

My 5-year old grand daughter hates being in the booster seat, so I don't make her. She's always buckled up though! CF

I'm one of those soccer moms that always have the car full of kids, three or four 13-year-olds and a couple of 5-year-olds. Since my 5-year-old thinks he's 13, he's embarrassed to put the booster seat on. So, I let him use the seat belt to save the aggravation. CF

(2) Failure to understand the importance of booster seats**.** Many parents/caregivers regard seat belts as the absolute equivalent of booster seats in terms of safety for anyone age four or older. Parents/caregivers who considered themselves to be deeply conscientious of their children's safety often found no safety advantage in using booster seats over restraining children in seat belts. This was a common area of ignorance and a major impediment to increasing booster seat use.

I never used a booster. I just buckle them in and go! RM

(3) Ignorance or lack of awareness of risks associated with not using booster seats. Participants were commonly unconcerned about nonuse of booster seats on short trips. They were more likely to use them on highway trips, however.

I won't put it on if I'm going less than 5 minutes. It (the booster seat) is always in the car. She'll sit on it but she won't put the belt on. But, if we're going more than 5 minutes, I'll insist on it. CF

Oh, if we're only going halfway down the street. SM

We live in a very rural area. Around there, none of the kids are buckled in. But, as soon as you hit the blacktop, they know that they have to be buckled up. RF

If we're going on the expressway, we need to use them. CM

If we're just going from one place to the next, not very far (we don't use them). SF

We live in the country on a dirt road. I don't worry too much about it until I hit the freeway. SF

(4) Perception that booster seat laws are not enforced. Participants indicated that it was unlikely that they would ever get caught violating the booster seat law. First, they identified that booster law enforcement would probably be a low priority for police officers. They also said that tinted windows and high vehicle window placement would preclude observations of violations. Second, participants reported no evidence of enforcement. None of these participants had ever received such a citation or knew anybody who had.

They're out there looking for people running red lights and speeding. Booster seats are not what they're out there looking for. RM

If they catch me sliding through a light and I don't have my kid in a booster seat, then I might get a ticket for it. Otherwise, I don't think I'd get a ticket for not using a booster seat. RM

I have never heard of anybody getting a ticket for it. PM

In addition, participants were not concerned about the severity of punishment, because they found it unlikely that they would be cited. An exception was in California, where traffic citations tend to draw severe fines and are therefore, more feared. In all States except California, participants felt that the penalties for booster seat violations were too light and that enforcement was next to non-existent.

I don't think the penalty is enough. You can get a $300 ticket for parking in a handicap spot. You've got your kid's life in your hands when you're driving 65 mph. The penalty's not enough. There's no deterrent. PM

(5) Situational factors. Parents/caregivers cited many other situational reasons for not regularly using booster seats. These included: **"**It's in the other car," "I was running late," "I just wasn't thinking about it," and "the child needed to sleep in the back seat."

The only time she's not in it is if my Dad has to pick her up. He doesn't have one in his car. But, he does buckle her in. CF

I admit that it's extremely important. It's just that I'm usually running late for the bus stop. RF

I normally won't move the car out of the driveway until everybody is buckled. They all know that's a hard rule. But, when we're taking a long trip and night and I see them slumped over to the side of that chair, I feel so bad. So, if they get out of it to lie down, I let them do it. SF

Late at night, on a long trip, it's too uncomfortable for them to sleep. I let them lie down in the back. PF

(6) Perception that booster seats are unsafe. One of the most surprising findings in this series of focus group sessions was that a segment of the population believes that booster seats are unsafe. There is a feeling that the child is safer in conventional seat belts. One common response was that the booster seat wobbles and cannot possibly be safer than a child safety seat.

I have a personal friend that was involved in a collision and she had the child in a backless one. Her daughter is now paralyzed from the waist down. They fold them right in half. SF

I just don't see how those little seats make them any safer than just using seat belts. SF

I don't feel like they're safe. They are better off in the seat belt. The booster seats slide from side to side. When you brake, the booster seat goes flying. PM

I think kids are safer buckled in seat belts in the back. The booster seat makes them too high and I'm afraid she's going to fly over the front seat. Seated lower, she has that extra protection from the front seat, not as far to fly. PF

(7) Perception of parents/caregivers that seats are uncomfortable. One of the most common complaints was that booster seats were uncomfortable for the children. Participants reported that the seats shift forward and tilt from side to side every time a sharp turn is taken. If the child is sleeping, there is nothing to hold him or her comfortably.

As they get older, they seem to get more uncomfortable in them. CM

(8) Difficulty fitting seats in the vehicle and moving them from vehicle to vehicle. Participants found a variety of structural shortcomings, especially when trying to use more than one seat in a vehicle.

The way they make the booster seats so wide, it's hard to put three kids in them in the back seat. CF

Booster seats are easy once you get them in place. It's very easy to get my 4-year-old in and out of it. But, when I have to change from one car to another… It can be on the right, left or center depending on the design of the car. The belt systems are different. It can get a little crazy. RF

3.4.2.3 Motivation for Full-Time Use of Booster Seats

Several themes emerged from the discussions on what motivated full-time booster seat use, including: (1) leading by example; (2) easy to use; (3) acceptance by children; and (4) parental authority.

(1) Leading by example. The most common thread among consistent users of booster seats was their own consistent use of seat belts. Participants indicated that adult use of seat belts provides a powerful example to the child. Also adults who do not consistently use belts themselves are far less likely to expect their children to be properly restrained.

I do it by example. When we get in the car, it's automatic for me and for them. SM

(2) Easy to Use. Most participants regarded the installation and use of booster seats as quite easy, especially compared with child safety seats. However, not every one agreed with this assessment.

The high-back booster can be difficult, but not the no-back booster. They are easy. You can easily adjust to right-hand or left-hand installation. RF

Booster seats are easy. Child seats are a pain in the neck. RM

They're not hard to put on. RF

(3) Acceptance by children. Participants stated that some children actually like the seats. While many children battle to get out of the seats, some are only too happy to be in them. For some, especially the 4- or 5-year-olds, booster seats were considered a step forward in growing up. Most children just enjoy being able to see more from their higher position in the car.

I like that they can see out the window better and so entertain themselves. RF

You see them in the rearview mirror better. RF

They're real proud for buckling themselves in. RF

He was so excited to be able to sit up high. PF

At that age, they're real independent and like that they can put themselves in and buckle up. RF

My son loves to sit in the booster seat. He just turned 4. He gets in there by himself and tries to buckle in. My daughter wants to sit in his booster seat. She's just 3. RM

My daughter doesn't like to ride without the booster seat. She loves being up high and seeing everything. CF

(4) Parental authority. Many parents/caregivers stated that they use their authority to make sure their children are in the booster seats.

I'll threaten her that the police are going to take her away. CF

We make a game of it. The three girls will run to get in the car seats and see who can get buckled up the fastest. CF

He hates the booster seat, but I insist on it. If he doesn't get in it, I say 'One! Two! Three! And he knows what that means. CF

I tell them if they don't get in their belts that Mom is going to jail. CF

As far as them complaining, that's a moot point. I'm the parent. End of discussion. CM

We'll just pull over. SM

My son was 3 and wouldn't stay in it. He learned how to unbuckle himself. I tried everything. I warned him that the police would get him. What finally worked is that I started the seat belt patrol. If one of kids reports another kid for not being buckled, that kid (the informer) gets 25 cents. I haven't had to dole out 25 cents for years. RF

3.4.2.4 Educational Messages to Increase Booster Seat Use

Participants examined four concept statements, each focusing on an argument for convincing parents/caregivers to use booster seats properly and consistently. These were the same concepts that were evaluated by law enforcement officers in the earlier focus groups, and are shown in Appendix D. The four concepts focused on the:

- RISKS associated with failure to restrain the child;
- threat of ENFORCEMENT for failure to restrain;
- EASE of installing and using booster seats; and
- DUTY of a parent to properly protect a child from harm;

Participants read the statements and ranked them according to how effective they might be in encouraging booster seat use.

The parent/caregiver groups took a somewhat different turn from the law enforcement groups. Parents/caregivers settled on two message concepts that they perceived to have equal merit and great power when combined—RISK and DUTY. While they considered law enforcement as one important way to motivate people to behave in a desired way, they did not feel that it was the only way or even the best way in the case of booster seats. Participants felt that parents/caregivers like themselves failed to use booster seats primarily out of ignorance of three things:

1. Ignorance of the proper way to install and use booster seats;
2. Ignorance of the law; and
3. Ignorance of the risk.

Participants offered that public information and education is the best way to address ignorance and to persuade people at the most emotional level (i.e., the love of their children). Consequently, the RISK concept and the DUTY concept scored particularly well. Like the officers, parents/caregivers seemed to feel that an appeal should first be made to the innate desire of parents to keep their children safe.

The RISK concept ushered in a very emotional segment of discussion with the groups. Many participants had not often stopped to think about the reality of the risk taken with their children every time they ventured out in a vehicle, even on a short trip. Their failure to put their children in booster seats had many causes, though most translated back to a lack of appreciation for how dangerous it was not to do so.

I do drive different with my son in the car. I am more aware of the risks. RM

I'm scared to death about drunk driving or someone molesting my child. But nothing has ever pulled my heartstrings about car seats. PF

This heightened sense of risk, many said was more compelling than the fear of a traffic ticket.

More than fines, the big thing to me would be learning about the risk. PM

The safety of your children is the highest factor, more so than getting a ticket. RM

Participants expressed a strong desire to see risk portrayed with visualized concepts, including crash dummies, victims' relatives, and even actual crash pictures.

Fear motivates people. It motivates me. CM

It has to be shocking, shocking enough that people will sit up and take notice. SM

Listening to another parent talk about it is good. You can easily put yourself in her place, imagine your own children. SM

ENFORCEMENT consistently drew high scores but, in discussion, always came in as second best to RISK and DUTY. Parents/caregivers were often skeptical that these laws are enforced, although they felt they should be. On they other hand, they were emotionally engaged, sometimes even surprised by, the degree of risk that was being exposed to them. Further, they often took to heart the reminders of their responsibilities contained in the DUTY concept.

Getting a ticket is a side issue. A parent is going to be more concerned about the safety of their child. RF

Enforcement is what happens to me. Risk is what happens to my child. That's more important to me. RM

I bet the cops see a dozen kids a day without any belts. But, they don't do anything because they don't want to take the time to pull you over and deal with that for 50 bucks. I'm sorry. I don't think they do. CF

It was also clear from these participants that the threat of a fine and points (ENFORCEMENT) is also powerful, even more so when combined with the realities of RISK.

I most of all don't want to get a ticket. This was the point that spoke to me. RF

This is the kind of thing my husband would respond to. This is the kind of thing that would make men say I really don't want that to happen to me. RF

When I get in the car, I'm not thinking I'm going to be in an accident. I'm thinking I'm going to get a ticket if I don't buckle up. I just feel that the chances of getting a ticket are greater than those of being in an accident. SF

The only time people do anything is when it hits their pocket. SM

I grew up seeing public service announcements telling us to wear our seat belts. But nobody did it until it became a law. CM

The EASY concept was inserted into the study based on literature findings that many people found child safety restraint to be a cumbersome task. As it turned out, booster seats largely escaped that accusation. Most participants found them pretty easy to use. Consequently, this concept was regarded as largely pointless.

I don't think easy or hard should be a determining factor for safety. RF

It's a feel-good message, but won't compel anyone to use the booster. RF

The DUTY concept had very great appeal in the focus group sessions. A few participants disliked the judgmental implications of the "it's your duty" statement.

I know all this stuff. Why are you preaching at me? RF

A lot of people don't want to be told what their duty is. But I think this would grab them. RM

It insulted me a bit. But, then I thought they're right. CF

However, the majority felt challenged to step up to their responsibilities as parents. Many also were stimulated by the need to be less permissive when dealing with the safety of their children.

I don't want to be a friend to my child. I want to be a parent. RM

Click It or Ticket is a personal choice. You're an adult. With your kids, it's black and white. You only have to have one accident. And that could be it with your kid. I'm not going to be lazy and rationalize why I'm not doing it this time. CM

You (the kid) can be mad at me. You can tell me you don't love me anymore. Doesn't matter. It's my job to keep you safe and I'm going to do it. CM

It puts it back on our shoulders and that's where it belongs. SF

You want to get people to take responsibility for themselves instead of forcing them. SM

3.4.2.5 Strategies Recommended by Parents/Caregivers

The following strategies for convincing the public to consistently use booster seats were volunteered by the focus group participants. Their recommendations largely focused on educational strategies to increase the public's knowledge about how to use a booster seat and the specifics of the booster seat law.

1. Education.

- Use the public schools. Teach children in the early grades and they will become disciples of booster seat safety.

  If there were campaigns in the schools and my kid came home with some of that knowledge, it would make it a lost easier to get them in the booster seats. PM

  Guest speakers in the schools. People who have actually experienced what can happen. The younger kids, especially, can get pretty preachy once they get something in their heads. SF

- Promote the public safety clinics.

  It's really nice when they have those car safety seat clinics. I went to one in my town and found out that both of my seats were in wrong. PM

  At the auto show, the police show up. They simulate accidents to show what happens when the seat belts aren't in use; and, they talk about the importance of child restraint. CL

- Create materials to interest the children in the topic (e.g., things such as safety videos with popular characters, coloring books, etc.).

  Target kids with coloring books and that sort of thing. SM

2. Heighten the sense of risk (publicity and education delivery). Show parents what may happen, and don't hesitate to be graphic.

   Show (through PI&E) the effects of kids getting hurt without the seat belts. PM

3. Publicity (teach the booster seat law).

   I think it's advertising. When you asked us about the law, I knew what I heard on the national radio commercials. I didn't know anything about the state law. PM

4. Solicit the involvement of child-oriented business. Encourage child entertainment and fast food companies to run promotions or to underwrite materials directed to their child audiences.

3.5 BRAINSTORMING SESSION

This task built upon the findings of the focus groups, the observational study, and the literature review, which provided the topics for discussion in the brainstorming session. The child passenger safety experience of the law enforcement and program coordinators participating in brainstorming session provided a reality check of the strategies recommended in the prior tasks, and helped to generate additional strategies. In brief, several hurdles limiting booster seat law enforcement were identified. These included: lack of commitment from law enforcement top management; lack of knowledge about child restraint laws and child passenger safety issues among law enforcement personnel as well as judges and prosecutors; weak child restraint laws (in terms of enforcement, fines, and penalties; and provisions for older booster seat age children); and empathy for violators. The session concluded with proposed strategies that focused on: education for law enforcement; judiciary outreach; stronger child restraint laws; increased perception of enforcement; community education; and public messages aimed at increasing risk perception among drivers about the injury consequences for unrestrained and inappropriately restrained 4- to 8-year-old children.

3.5.1 Barriers to Booster Seat Law Enforcement

Panelists revealed several barriers to the enforcement of booster seat laws. These barriers are: lack of commitment by law enforcement top management personnel; lack of education in CPS issues among law enforcement and judicial personnel; weak child restraint laws; and empathy for violators.

3.5.1.1 Lack of Commitment by Law Enforcement Agencies

Panelists were in agreement that enforcement of child restraint law violations must be a priority that comes from the top down. A common factor cited by the law enforcement panelists was that if the chief of police is unwilling to make enforcement of the booster seat law (and other occupant restraint laws) a priority, then these laws will not be enforced by department officers.

3.5.1.2 Lack of CPS Education Among Law Enforcement Personnel

The consensus among the law enforcement panelists was that most patrol officers, line officers, and chiefs are not well educated about child occupant restraint issues or their State's child restraint laws. There are several reasons for this, including a lack of commitment from the police departments to train officers on this issue; and lack of staffing, resources, and time for training. Also, CPS issues are not covered in basic training for new recruits at the police academies.

3.5.1.3 Lack of Judicial Outreach

Panelists stated that in general, judges do not know the specifics of booster seat and other child restraint laws. They often think citations for booster law violations are frivolous, and will reduce fines or dismiss the charge completely, particularly if minute details are excluded from the ticket. Panelists commented that judges are elected officials and strive to maintain good will among the public by not persecuting parents/caregivers for what they think is a trivial violation. Many judges are lenient of the CPS issue and even admonish law enforcement officers for writing these "frivolous tickets." This attitude by judges further serves to reduce officers' motivation to write tickets for booster seat law violations.

3.5.1.4 Weak Child Restraint Laws

In some States, the booster seat law is a secondary enforcement law. Thus, the driver must be cited for a primary violation, before a citation can be given for the booster seat violation. In addition, if the driver goes to court and the primary violation is dismissed, the booster seat violation is dismissed as well. In many States, fines for booster seat violations are dismissed or reduced if the violator shows evidence at a court hearing that a booster seat was purchased or acquired. While this was generally acceptable to panelists as the intent of child restraint laws is to ensure that children are properly restrained, panelists reported anecdotal evidence of parents/caregivers returning the booster seat to the retailer after the court hearing. These issues tend to reduce officers' motivation to enforce booster seat laws.

3.5.1.5 Empathy for Parents/Caregivers

Several officers mentioned that empathy for certain types of drivers (e.g., low-income parents, over-burdened mothers) is often a barrier to writing tickets for violators. Fines become barriers to officers in writing tickets. Officers indicated they would often rather educate than persecute parents/caregivers for violating booster laws. Educating officers about the risks involved to a child who is inappropriately restrained may help reduce this practice.

3.5.2 Strategies to Promote Booster Seat Law Enforcement

Panelists identified several strategies that would promote enforcement of booster seat laws. Many of these strategies have a publicity and/or educational component, but enforcement is key in these strategies.

3.5.2.1 Top Management Support

Eliciting support from the top is not a new approach in promoting occupant restraint enforcement. However, it was a dominant theme by panelists for increasing enforcement of child restraint and booster seat laws. If the chief of police supports enforcement of booster seat laws, then the line officers and patrol staff will enforce them. Panelists identified a need to develop programs that will reach the chiefs of police to support booster seat laws. One panelist stated that his police chief tells the officers to "work smarter, not harder; spend the 5 minutes to write the ticket instead of 3 to 4 hours writing a report at the crash scene with dead bodies."

3.5.2.2 Educating Law Enforcement Personnel

Panelists made the point that many law enforcement officers are unfamiliar with child restraint systems and the child restraint laws in their States. If officers are educated about CPS issues, they will increase their involvement in educating the public and enforcing the child restraint laws. The key recommendation from the brainstorming session was that law enforcement officers need to be educated about the appropriate child restraint system by age and weight of a child, as well as the details of the State's child restraint laws. This concept was so important to panelists that they strongly recommended that CPS education begin at basic training at the police academies.

At the department level, it was suggested that a 3- to 4-hour course covering the basics may be more practical than the 32-hour CPS-certification course for most police departments, although the 32-hour course would be ideal.

Some panelists suggested making CPS education part of the monthly education requirement by the police department. Suggestions for in-house training included the use of videos, computerized training, e-mail reminders, and laminated cards with details of the child restraint laws for officers to take with them on the street. Inquiries should be made with the mandatory police enforcement officer training commission (MPEOTC) about including training that focuses on child passenger safety. Several panelists noted that tools have already been developed that can be used to teach the basics of proper use. As an example, Partners for Child

Passenger Safety has six online videos that are 5 minutes each (in English and in Spanish), and address restraint use for infants, toddlers, booster-age children, and older children; lower anchors and tethers, and air bags.[3] NHTSA has also developed a roll call video on booster seat use to reach patrol officers.[4]

3.5.2.3 Judicial Outreach

Panelists indicated that judges and others in the court system need to understand the importance of child restraint laws in protecting children, and the risks of allowing children to be restrained inappropriately. They need to be educated about the appropriate restraint type by children's ages and weights. Complaints from law enforcement officers about judges not understanding child restraint systems or the child restraint laws; admonishing officers for writing "frivolous" tickets; and reducing fines for fear of constituent disapproval is a barrier to officers trying to enforce the law.

Seminars, quarterly mandatory meetings, and other training sessions are recommended to educate judges to ensure better enforcement of the child restraint laws. Panelists highlighted the importance of convincing the lead judge in each jurisdiction about the importance of child passenger safety, so it becomes a priority. It was suggested that a video like the one shown during the brainstorming session of a booster-age child becoming paralyzed following a crash in which he was restrained using the adult seat belt (with the shoulder belt behind his back) would be an effective introduction to the topic of appropriate restraint and why laws should be enforced.[5]

3.5.2.4 Strengthen Booster Seat Laws

A common complaint among police officers is the restrictions placed on occupant protection laws when they are secondary law violations. Not only must there be a primary law violation cited to cite a driver for violating the secondary booster seat law, but the secondary violation is dismissed if the primary violation is dismissed in court. Thus, panelists agreed that promoting the enactment of primary booster seat laws would likely increase booster seat use. As of July 1, 2007, child passenger safety laws are secondary or conditional in 5 States.

Booster seat laws should also follow best practice recommendations. In more than half of the States with booster seat laws, children under age 8 are considered by law to be appropriately restrained if they are using only the vehicle seat belts. This legal but inappropriate restraint type puts these children at risk of injury. Laws that reflect best practice recommendations will remove the confusion experienced by parents/caregivers when choosing an appropriate restraint for their children and law enforcement officers when they educate about and enforce the booster seat law.

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[3] Available at www.chop.edu/carseat

[4] "Booster Seats—The Missing Link," available at www.boosterseat.gov.

[5] "Boost 'Em in the Back Seat," presented by Dr. Kelli Will of Eastern Virginia Medical School, developed on a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Finally, to increase booster seat use, penalties for violations must be stiffer. Panelists stated that changing behavior is difficult, and that education alone will not increase compliance. Education coupled with large fines would be more effective.

3.5.2.5 Publicity to Increase Perception of Booster Seat Law Enforcement

More widespread visibility of law enforcement officers was recommended in publicity that encourages booster seat use. Panelists stated that increasing the presence of law enforcement agents on billboards, pamphlets, and other material promoting booster seat use and describing the child restraint law is important. They agreed that billboards and novellas were more effective when an officer was in the picture than when an officer was not. Also, they stated that using local officers in ads makes a big impact with the public, by showing them that enforcement is happening in their community. Cable TV programs interviewing law enforcement officers on the topic of CPS is another way to reach the community. Using narration by law enforcement officers in radio and television public service announcements is important. One officer suggested that using messages to convey the violence of a car crash without actually showing gore would be effective. His example was "We don't want to body-bag a 4-year-old. We'd rather write a ticket," and the visual component accompanying this message could be a yellow tarp placed over a small body.

3.5.2.6 Lack of Specificity in Identifying Booster Seat Law Violations on Traffic Citations

In many States, the section of the vehicle code that describes the booster seat law is a subsection of the vehicle code that describes the child restraint law. In many cases, law enforcement officers do not write subsection numbers on citations. Therefore, unless the officer provides written comments on the ticket, it is impossible to distinguish between a child safety seat law violation and a booster seat law violation. In other words, drivers are cited for violating the child restraint law, but the specific violation type (child safety seat or booster seat) will not be coded on the citation (or entered into department data management systems). Similarly in NHTSA-sponsored seat belt enforcement program blitzes, child restraint law violations are not specified as child safety seat or booster seat law violations. The practice of grouping child safety seat and booster seat law violations into a general category of child restraint law violations makes it difficult, if not impossible, to perform evaluations of the effectiveness of programs to increase booster seat use (such as increased enforcement of the booster seat law).

3.5.2.7 Community Outreach by Law Enforcement Agents

Community education programs using law enforcement officers to deliver the safety message is not a new concept, but it is important and needs to continue, according to the panelists. Their presence in schools and at public events providing education about appropriate restraint use reinforces both the educational and enforcement components. Panelists suggested that education checkpoints or mini-cades would be ideal places to educate the public on booster seat use.

3.5.2.8 Messages to Increase Risk Perception of Public

Panelists recommended message concepts that need to be included in law-enforcement-related publicity and educational programs. Two important concepts to covey are: awareness of the risks associated with improper restraint use and parental duty to do the right thing. Parents must be made aware of the risks associated with not using booster seats. Testimonials of children killed or severely injured, or simulated crash scenes showing injuries that could occur when children are not using booster seats were identified as possible message components. Panelists agreed that there is an "immunity fallacy" among parents/caregivers —a reduced perception of risk—that contributes to nonuse of appropriate restraints. Panelists generally agreed with the concept that campaigns which are purely informational will not get parents/ caregivers' attention, because parents/caregivers think these messages don't apply to them. They don't realize the potential for harm when they allow their booster-seat-age children to ride using adult seat belts; they believe they have done their duty by restraining the child. To get parents/caregivers' attention, messages must have an emotional component that shocks them into doing the right thing. Fear appeals to increase risk perception were supported by many panelists. Making parents feel guilty for not using booster seats was also a recommended message.

4.0 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BOOSTER SEAT LAWS

The following list of strategies, which can be categorized as education, enforcement and legislation, were developed in this project. Although some strategies have been standard procedure, they continue to be viable.

I. Educational Strategies

The first group of strategies is to educate those parents and caregivers who do not use, or inconsistently use, booster seats. This approach has the most face validity. The assumption is that once parents and caregivers know how, when, and why they should use booster seats, they will properly secure their booster-age children. Each year, more children reach booster seat age, so the need to educate parents and caregivers remains constant. Efforts to educate parents and caregivers need to be periodically refreshed to address changing sensibilities, changes in law, and updated research about child passenger safety. The following educational strategies are focused on parents/caregivers to increase the effectiveness of booster seat laws.

A. Teach Parents and Caregivers the Best Practices for Properly Securing Booster-Seat-Age Children.

Parents and caregivers should know the correct age, weight, and height when their child needs to ride in a booster seat. This includes knowing the specific details of their State's booster seat law (including the fine for violating the law), and the differences between what the State child restraint laws require and what the best practices are for children in this age group.

Many people can educate parents and caregivers about booster seat use. This includes child safety advocates, car seat technicians, law enforcement officers, emergency service technicians and health care providers, as well as child safety seat and car manufacturers and retailers. Look for opportunities with people who work with booster-seat-age children.

Likewise, the settings for educating parents and caregivers also vary and can include health care facilities, schools, child care centers, car seat inspection stations, car dealerships, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and other types of community settings. Posters presenting best practices (e.g., NHTSA's 4 Steps for Kids) can be prominently displayed in the child safety seat department in retail stores and in bulk mail retail flyers. When the State law meets best practice, specifics of the law should also be posted in retail stores where child safety and booster seats are sold.

Public messages—both paid media and earned media—can be very effective at increasing parents/caregivers' knowledge of booster seat laws. Messages may be disseminated through radio and television spots, as well as billboards, newspaper articles (unearned media) and handouts. State licensing agencies can also promote information about their occupant restraint laws through license renewal letters to drivers; distribution of publications (e.g., driving manual); and displays on counters at licensing centers.

In communities that are linguistically and culturally isolated, child passenger safety educators should be culturally and linguistically sensitive to their audience. Health care

providers, child safety advocates, and community representatives should make a special effort to reach these audiences at health care settings, schools and community-oriented centers such as places of worship and ethnic markets. In addition, mobile car seat inspection stations should plan events in these communities.

B. Teach Parents and Caregivers About the Risks of Inappropriate Restraint Use.

Many parents have a low sense of risk or operate under an "immunity fallacy." That is, they believe that they will never be involved in a crash, and therefore have a general lack of concern about the potential for injury or death as a result of not restraining or improperly restraining their children. Increasing risk perception needs to be a priority in program messages. The assumption is that knowledge about the negative consequences of improperly restraining a child will deter this behavior, and will prompt parents to want to adequately protect their children.

Messages that appeal to the parents' "sense of duty to protect their children," and which uses social sanctioning to enforce the use of appropriate restraints (e.g., "it's the right thing to do") may motivate parents to properly restrain their booster-seat-age children.

Other leverage points can be car insurance companies, which could apply surcharges to policies if crash-involved policy holders are cited for being unrestrained or for improperly restraining their children.

C. Educate Low-Income Parents and Caregivers About Booster Seat Resources in Their Communities.

Accessibility to booster seats is critical with low-income parents and caregivers. Booster seat giveaways, low-cost seats, and store coupons should be available. Child safety advocates and retail stores should collaborate to offer child restraint products in low-income communities.

II. Enforcement Strategies

Potential enforcement strategies to improve effectiveness of booster seat laws encompass five key topic areas. They are achieving top-management support; training, and educating more law enforcement personnel; conducting more judicial outreach; enforcing all occupant restraint laws; and publicizing enforcement activities.

A. Motivate Top Law Enforcement Officials to Strictly Enforce Occupant Restraint Laws.

The first priority is to gain top management support for enforcing occupant restraint laws. The chiefs of police provide the direction, tone, and energy level necessary to support traffic law enforcement; and their willingness to engage in this enforcement activity is critical. Agencies are aware of the grant money that is usually provided to conduct these programs; and enforcement details usually include officers working overtime and not on agency time. If lack of grant money is not an issue, but lack of interest in enforcing child restraint laws prevails, then child safety advocates can make the point that increased traffic stops to enforce child restraint laws often lead to detection of other violations (drugs, guns, etc).

B. Train Law Enforcement Officers about Child Passenger Safety Issues

Many law enforcement officers are hesitant to enforce child restraint laws and educate parents/caregivers about child restraints because they do not know which restraint type is appropriate for which age/weight child and how restraints should be used. They also generally have only a vague understanding of the child restraint laws in their State. The assumption underlying this strategy is that if officers were trained in CPS issues, then they would have the confidence and be more likely to enforce the child restraint laws. Therefore, it is recommended that a 3- to 4-hour course that presents the basics of child occupant protection be included in basic training at the police academies.

Ideally, all law enforcement officers should take the 32-hour CPS certification course. However, this is not practical for basic training or for law enforcement departments. However, police departments can train their officers in child passenger safety issues in other ways. For example, training may be provided through videos (e.g., NHTSA's roll-call video for booster seats), computerized training, email reminders, and laminated cards with details of the child restraint laws on one side and appropriate restraints by age and weight on the other side for reference during traffic stops. NHTSA is presently developing a curriculum to train law enforcement personnel with occupant protection issues relevant to their daily activities. The Traffic Occupant Protection Strategies (TOPS) curriculum is a one-day (4- to 8-hour) block of instruction that will provide road officers and line supervisors with the information they need to effectively assess and act on occupant protection issues at roadside. There is a component in the curriculum on child safety seats and booster seats.

C. Train Judges About Child Passenger Safety Issues.

Judicial outreach is also critical. Law enforcement officers in the focus groups reported that many judges are unfamiliar with child restraint laws or think they are trivial. Educating local magistrates and other members of the judiciary is recommended to enhance their understanding of child passenger safety issues, including the specifics of the booster seat law in their States. This education could be provided during their annual training sessions. In addition, 38 States or Territories currently have Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutors (TSRPs) who provide guidance in traffic safety and the prosecution of traffic related issues, such as impaired driving. Similar to education and training for law enforcement agents, it is recommended that the TSRPs and other prosecutors be formally trained in CPS issues.

D. Vigorously Enforce Child Passenger Safety Laws.

Highly visible enforcement of child restraint laws is critical to deter parents and caregivers from improperly restraining their children. This type of enforcement needs to continue. In most cases, grant money must be offered for enforcement of occupant restraint laws, since most of the staff resources are provided on personnel overtime, not agency budget. States with secondary occupant restraint laws need to rely on the most effective methods to enforce these laws. In many cases, roving patrols are the most effective means of identifying primary offense violators, providing the opportunity to cite drivers for observed secondary

occupant restraint violations. Publicity surrounding these enforcement activities is also important. At a minimum, reporting weekly or monthly occupant restraint violations in the "Police News" section of the local newspaper may improve public perception that enforcement is occurring.

Law enforcement officers should also enforce seat belt laws. Higher percentages of children are restrained when the drivers transporting them are belted (Glassbrenner & Ye, 2007; Decina & Lococo, 2004).

E. Collect Appropriate Enforcement Data to Refine Enforcement Efforts.

Every law enforcement agency has its own method of collecting and analyzing data related to crashes, fatalities, and enforcement. However, there is a need for law enforcement agencies to identify the specific violation of a child restraint law when citations are written for these violations. In many cases, officers record the section number of the child safety seat law, but not the subsection of the vehicle code that is needed to discriminate whether the infraction was a child safety seat or a booster seat violation. Consistent record keeping and data management of child safety seat law and the booster seat law violations is critical to properly evaluate the effectiveness of booster seat laws.

It is also recommended that law enforcement officers be included in the publicity promoting booster seat laws and best practices for these children. Their presence on billboards, pamphlets, cable television programs, radio programs, and public service announcements is critical to reinforce to the public that using appropriate child restraints is important for children's safety, it is the law, and it will be enforced. Because of the belief that many parents/caregivers operate under an "immunity fallacy," it is recommended that law enforcement messages also convey the risks of allowing children to ride without being appropriately restrained. A fear appeal presented by law enforcement officials may be the best way to get the attention of those who don't realize they are doing anything dangerous by allowing their child passengers to be either unrestrained or inappropriately secured in a seat belt.

III. Legislation

A final recommendation is to continue to apply pressure on legislators to promote booster seat laws in States that do not currently have them; promote "stronger" booster seat laws; and promote primary enforcement of seat belt laws. This study showed that passage of a booster seat law increases child safety seat and booster seat use. To strengthen these laws, there is a need to increase the age, and height limits in the booster seat provisions of the child restraint law in many States (e.g., at least to 8 years old and 4' 9" tall). The study found that there are some misperceptions by parents/caregivers that the State law represents the best practice; therefore if they follow the law, their children are safely secured. However, the booster seat laws do not represent best practice in all States.

A few States also have the booster seat provision as a secondary violation. This makes it more difficult to enforce the booster seat laws, since the driver must first be pulled over for a primary violation. In addition, if the primary violation is dismissed by the court, the booster seat

violation gets dismissed as well. This is often very frustrating for law enforcement and discourages future enforcement of the booster seat laws.

Finally, there is a need to continue pressure on legislatures to push for primary seat belt laws. Seat belt use rates are higher in States with primary seat belt laws (Glassbrenner & Ye, 2006); and children are more likely to be restrained when drivers are buckled (Glassbrenner & Ye, 2007; Decina & Lococo, 2004). This legislative action alone could have significant positive outcomes for increasing booster seat use.

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APPENDIX A: Booster Seat Definitions and Types

A booster seat is a platform or specially designed seat that elevates the child such that the vehicle seat belt properly fits the child. The seat belt restrains the child in a crash. Booster seats are designed for children who have outgrown child restraint systems at 40 lbs. and are not large enough for a vehicle seat belt. Children should use a belt positioning booster seat until they are at least 8 years old or 4'9" tall. The three basic types—belt-positioning booster, combination child restraint, and shield booster—are described below, using definitions provided by Stewart, Lang, and Emery (2005):

- The belt-positioning booster (BPB) raises the child so the vehicle lap and shoulder belts fit better. The vehicle belts actually restrain the child. A BPB may be a low, backless booster or may have a high back that provides head restraint and some support for the child while sleeping.

Backless Belt-Positioning Booster Seat.

High-Back Belt-Positioning Booster Seat.

- The combination child restraint is a forward-facing child restraint system that can be transformed into a belt-positioning booster by removing the harness.

- The shield booster is a platform with a wrap-around shield. It is for a child who weighs between 30 and 40 pounds. This type of booster seat is not recommended for use. Children of this weight should be in a forward-facing child restraint system with a harness.

Combination Child Restraint.

Graphics: *A Guidebook for Observing Occupant Restraint System Use and Misuse*. (AAAFTS, 2005). www.aafoundation.org/pdf/restraintguidebook.pdf and *Are You Using it Right?* (NHTSA, 2004; DOT HS 809 245) www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/AreYouUsing/pages/FFSeatYES.htm

APPENDIX B:

Inventory of State Child Occupant Protection Laws and Seat Belt Laws
(As of June 2007)

ALABAMA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Alabama CPS law covers children through age 15. Rear-facing child restraints are required for infants until at least one year of age or 20 pounds. Forward-facing restraints are required until the child is at least five years of age or 40 pounds. Booster seats are required until the child is six years of age. Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required for children through age 15.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	39	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	Yes	Yes
CPS Law Exemptions	Applies only to passenger cars, pickup trucks, vans with a seating capacity of 10 or less, minivans, and sports utility vehicles. Does not apply to taxis and all motor vehicles with a seating capacity of 11 or more passengers.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained. Rear-seat passengers age 16 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Driver or occupant whose physical or medical condition prevents using a seat belt; Newspaper delivery people and rural letter carriers; People riding in pre-1965 vehicles; Passengers riding in vehicles that normally operate in reverse.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

ALASKA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Alaska CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 4 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 4 through 15 must be restrained by either a child restraint, booster seat or seat belt, whichever is appropriate for the particular child.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	3	Na	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 4			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	School buses not equipped with seat belts, emergency vehicles, mail and newspaper carriers, people with physical or medical conditions which make use of a seat belt impractical, vehicles not equipped with seat belts.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	All drivers and passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	15	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	School buses not equipped with seat belts; emergency vehicles; mail and newspaper carriers; people with physical or medical conditions which make use of a seat belt impractical; vehicles not equipped with seat belts.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

ARIZONA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Arizona CPS law covers children through age 4. Children less than age 5 must be in a child restraint in the front or back seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	4	na	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 5			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles manufactured without seat belts; recreational vehicles; commercial motor vehicles; transporting a child in an emergency to obtain medical care; if transporting more than one child in a vehicle and as many child restraints as is possible are already installed.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	All front-seat passengers in vehicles designed to carry fewer than 10 passengers are required to use a lap and shoulder belt (if one is available) or just a lap belt.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles designed to carry 10 or more passengers; vehicles manufactured prior to model year 1972; vehicles not equipped with seat belts; physician certified medical or psychological reasons not to wear a seat belt; U.S. postal service letter carriers while performing duties.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

ARKANSAS				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Arkansas CPS law covers children through age 14. Children less than age 6 and less than 60 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children may be restrained by a seat belt at age 6 or 60 pounds, whichever comes first. Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required for children through age 14.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	59	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 or 60 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	100	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles for hire; emergency vehicles; emergency situations; children who are physically unable to be restrained because of medical reasons.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained. Rear-seat passengers age 15 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to have seat belts; physician certified physical disabilities; rural letter carriers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: All people are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

CALIFORNIA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The California CPS law covers children through age 15. Children must be properly secured in the back seat in a child restraint until they are at least 6 years old or 60 pounds. Children who are at least 6 years old or weigh at least 60 pounds may be restrained by a properly fitted seat belt. Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required for children through age 15.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	59	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 or 60 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	100	Yes	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Court may exempt child from use of a child restraint requirement if it is determined that the use of a child restraint would be impractical by reason of physical unfitness, medical condition, or size; Children may be secured by a seat belt in case of a life-threatening emergency or when a child is being transported in an authorized emergency vehicle, if there is no child restraint available and the child is at least 1 year of age.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	All drivers and passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Taxicabs; certified physical or mental conditions; emergency vehicle passengers behind the front seat; newspaper and rural postal carriers; passengers over 16 using a "sleeper berth." Drivers of limousines for hire or an emergency vehicle must be restrained, but rear-seat occupants are exempt.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting any person in or on the back of a pickup or flatbed motor truck. People riding in or on the back of the truck also can be cited.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

COLORADO				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Colorado CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than 1 year of age and less than 20 pounds must be in a rear-facing child restraint. Children 1-3 years old who weigh 20-39 pounds must be in a forward-facing child restraint. Children 4-5 years old and less than 55 inches tall must be in a child restraint or booster seat. Children 6-15 years old or at least 55 inches tall must be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	40	54	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 or 55 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary for children less than age 4 and age 6-15. Secondary for children 4-5 years old required to be in a booster.			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Children being transported in a medical emergency; children are being transported in a motor vehicle built to commercial standards such as a school bus; vehicles not privately owned.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained. Rear-seat passengers age 16 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	15	Yes	Yes if less than 17	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Members of ambulance teams involved in patient care; Police officers performing duties; Physician certified physical or psychological disabling condition; Vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; Rural letter carriers; Commercial vehicles; Residential delivery or pickup service vehicles.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: All people are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

CONNECTICUT				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Connecticut CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 1 or less than 20 pounds must be in a rear-facing child restraint. Children ages 1-6 or 20-59 pounds must be in a child restraint or booster seat. Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required for children through age 15. Children less than age 4 must be in the back seat unless the vehicle does not have a back seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	6	59	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 7 and 60 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	60	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Bus having a tonnage rating of one ton or more.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all front-seat passengers must be restrained. Rear-seat passengers age 16 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	15	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Newspaper and postal carriers; emergency vehicles.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: People younger than age 16 are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

DELAWARE				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Delaware CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 15, in either the front or rear seat, must be restrained. Children less than age 7 and less than 60 pounds must be in a child restraint or booster seat. Children who are at least age 7 or at least 60 pounds must be restrained by either a child restraint, booster seat or seat belt. Children less than 12 years old and less than 66 inches tall must be in the rear seat if the vehicle has an active passenger side air bag not designed specifically for children and small adults.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	6	59	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 7 or 60 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Secondary for rear-seat requirements. Primary for all other violations.			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	29	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Physical disabilities or medical reasons; vehicles not required to be equipped with belts; letter carriers.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	All drivers and passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Physician- or physical-therapist-certified condition prohibiting use; vehicle not required to be equipped with seat belts; U.S. Postal Service carriers while performing duties.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The District of Columbia CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 8 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 8-15 must be restrained by either a child restraint, booster seat or seat belt. Children must be in the rear seat if unrestrained due to not having a seat belt available.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	75	No	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Parents or legal guardians may transport their own children without restraint if their other children under 16 are using all the available seat belts, but the unrestrained child may not be in the front seat of the vehicle.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	All drivers and passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	No	Yes	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Physician-certified condition preventing use; When all seat belts are in use by others, but the driver must insure that children 16 and under have preference to a seating position with seat belts over people over the age of 16.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: All people are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

FLORIDA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Florida CPS law covers children through age 5. Children less than age 4 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 4 and 5 must be in a child restraint or seat belt. Children ages 6-17 are covered by the Florida Seat Belt Law and must be restrained in either the front or rear seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	3	na	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 4			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	60	Yes	Yes	Yes
CPS Law Exemptions	School buses (not including common carriers in the urban transportation of school children); buses used to transport people for compensation; farm tractors or other farm equipment; trucks weighing more than 5,000 pounds; motorcycles, mopeds, and bicycles.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	All front-seat occupants must buckle up, regardless of age. Rear-seat occupants less than age 18 must also be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary: For passengers less than age 18; Secondary: Driver and front-seat passengers age 18 and older.			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	30	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Physical or medical condition preventing seat belt use; newspaper carriers; solid waste or recyclable collection service employees in course of duties; occupants of the living quarters of a recreational vehicle; occupants in the front of a pickup truck when all available restraints are in use by others.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in or on the back of a pickup or flatbed.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

GEORGIA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Georgia CPS law covers children through age 5. Children less than age 6 and less than 57 inches tall must be in a child restraint. Children 57" or taller may be in a seat belt. Children less than age 6 must be in the rear seat if a rear-seat position is available. Children ages 6-17 are covered by the Georgia Seat Belt Law and must be restrained in either the front or rear seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	na	57	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 or 57 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	No	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Taxicabs; public transit vehicles; certain multifunctional-school-activities-buses are also exempt for 5-year-old children; certain licensed childcare facility vans.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	All front-seat occupants must buckle up, regardless of age. Rear-seat occupants less than age 18 must also be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	15	No	Yes	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	If at age 18 or older: vehicles making frequent delivery stops; physical or medical condition preventing use of a seat belt; rural letter carriers; newspaper deliveries; vehicles operated in reverse; vehicles with a model year prior to 1965 or vehicles not required to have seat belts; emergency vehicles.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in or on the back of a pickup or flatbed.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

HAWAII				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Hawaii CPS law covers children through age 7. Children less than age 4 must be in a child restraint. Children less than age 8 and less than 4'9" tall must be in a child restraint or booster seat. Children ages 8-17 are covered by the Hawaii Seat Belt Law and must be restrained in either the front or rear seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	57	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 58 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	100	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Emergency vehicles; commercial vehicles; mass transit vehicles; if the number of people in a vehicle exceeds the number of seat belts in the vehicle.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all front-seat passengers must be restrained by seat belts. Children ages 8-17 must use seat belts in rear seating positions.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	45	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Emergency vehicles; mass transit vehicles; vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; there are more people than seat belts and all seat belts are being used; conditions which prevent restraint by the seat belt; taxi drivers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: All people are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

IDAHO				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Idaho CPS law covers children through age 6. Children less than age 7, in either the front or rear seat, must be restrained in a child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	6	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 7			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	100	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	If all seat belts are in use; If being held for nursing or attending to other immediate physiological needs.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Physician-certified condition; motorcycles; farm vehicles; emergency vehicles; if all available front seat belts are in use; mail carriers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

ILLINOIS				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Illinois CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 8 must be in a child restraint or booster seat. Children weighing more than 40 pounds may use a lap belt in the rear seat if the vehicle is not equipped with a lap and shoulder seat belt. Children ages 8-15 must be restrained by either a child restraint, booster seat, or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Commercial motor vehicle; vehicles with gross vehicle weight ratings more than 9,000 pounds.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained. All passengers of a driver less than age 18 must be restrained. Rear-seat passengers ages 16 and older are not required to be restrained if the driver is age 18 or older.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Delivery vehicles making frequent stops or delivering from the vehicle and the speed of the vehicle between stops does not exceed 15 mph; physician statement that the person is unable to wear a seat belt; official documentation from another state that the person is unable to wear a seat belt; vehicle being operated in reverse; vehicle with a model year prior to 1965; motorcycles, motor driven cycles, or motorized pedalcycles; vehicle which is not required to be equipped with seat belts; rural letter carriers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

INDIANA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Indiana CPS law covers children through age 15. If the driver has an Indiana driver license: Children less than age 8 must be in a child restraint or booster. Children ages 8-15 must be restrained by either a child restraint, booster seat or seat belt. If the driver does not have an Indiana driver license: Children less than age 16 may be restrained by either a child restraint or a seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	School bus; taxicab; ambulance; public passenger bus; vehicle with a capacity greater than 9 individuals and is owned or leased and operated by a religious or nonprofit youth organization; antique motor vehicle; motorcycle; law enforcement vehicle while performing duties; emergency situations.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained. Rear-seat passengers ages 16 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Medical conditions; commercial or Postal Service vehicle that makes frequent stops; rural carriers while on route; newspaper motor route carrier or hauler making frequent stops; driver examiner while conducting a driving text.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

IOWA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Iowa CPS law covers children through age 10. Children less than age 1 and who weigh less than 20 pounds must be in a rear-facing child restraint. Children ages 1-5 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 6-10 must be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Physician-certified medical, physical, or mental disabilities; school bus; motorcycles; vehicles manufactured before 1966; emergency vehicles; peace officers on official duty; children in motor homes and not riding in the front passenger seat.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained. Rear-seat passengers ages 11 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles manufactured before 1966; work vehicles requiring occupants to get in and out frequently, provided they don't exceed 25 mph between stops; rural letter carriers making deliveries; buses; doctor certificate stating reason for non-use and expiration date; passengers (not drivers) in emergency vehicles during an emergency trip; vans, trucks, buses and multipurpose vehicles manufactured before 1972; people in the front seat of motor vehicles primarily used by handicapped people who utilize collapsible wheelchairs.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

KANSAS				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Kansas CPS law covers children through age 13. Children less than 4 years of age must be restrained in a child restraint. Children 4-7 who are less than 80 pounds and less than 57" tall must be restrained by a child restraint; children 8-13 years old must be restrained by a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	79	56	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 80 pounds or 57 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles designed for carrying more than 10 passengers; if the number of children ages 4 - 13 exceeds the number of seat belts and belts are in use by children.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained. Rear-seat passengers ages 14 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	10	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; vehicles designed for carrying more than 10 passengers; vehicles constructed on a truck chassis registered for more than 12,000 pounds; farm trucks registered for more than 16,000 pounds; motorcycles and trailers; occupants who possess a written statement from a licensed physician; mail carriers while engaged in delivery and collection of mail; newspaper carriers engaged in newspaper delivery.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 14 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

KENTUCKY				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Kentucky CPS law does not specify the children's ages. Children 40 inches tall or less must be restrained in a child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	na	na	40	No
Seat Belt Allowed	41 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to have belts; farm trucks			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	All drivers and passengers over 40 inches tall must be restrained by a seat belt.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to have belts; farm trucks; medical or physical conditions preventing use of a seat belt; letter carriers while performing duties			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

LOUISIANA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Louisiana CPS law covers children through age 12. Children younger than 1 year of age or less than 20 pounds must be in rear-facing child restraints. Children ages 1-3 or who weigh 20-39 pounds must be in forward-facing child restraints. Children who are 4-5 years old or who weigh 40-60 pounds must be in booster seats. Children ages 6-12 must be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	60	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 and 61 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Truck capacity of over 2000 pounds; ambulance or other emergency vehicle; school bus; church bus, private bus, or recreational vehicle which has a passenger capacity of over 10 people; or commercial truck, van, or taxi; if vehicle is being used as an ambulance or other emergency vehicle; emergencies; unable to be restrained because of medical reasons.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained when the vehicle is in forward motion. Rear-seat passengers ages 13 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Conditional	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Rural letter carriers; some farm vehicles; newspaper delivery people; some utility workers; physically or mentally disabling conditions preventing belt use.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 12 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

MAINE				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Maine CPS law covers children through age 17. Children less than 40 pounds and less than age 4 must be in a child restraint. Children at least 40-79 pounds and less than age 8 must be in a child restraint or booster. Children less than age 12 and less than 100 pounds must be in the back seat whenever possible.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	79	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 80 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	62	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; if all seating positions are occupied.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Yes			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	62	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; if all seating positions are occupied; medical conditions.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 19 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

MARYLAND				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Maryland CPS law covers children through age 15. Children under the age of 6 or weighing less than 40 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children ages 6-15 are required to be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	40	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 and 40 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	If use of a child safety seat by a particular child would be impractical due to the child's weight, physical unfitness, or other medical reason; if the number of children subject to the provisions of this section exceeds the number of passenger securing locations suitable for securing a child either in a seat belt or in a child safety seat in accordance with this section, and all of those securing locations are in use by children.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers next to the door are required to wear seat belts.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	unk
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	People who cannot use a seat belt for physical or medical reasons; U.S. Postal Service carriers or contractors delivering mail; historic vehicles 20 years old or older.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 16 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

MASSACHUSETTS				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Massachusetts CPS law covers children through age 12. Children under 5 years of age and weighing less than 40 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children ages 5-12 must be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	4	40	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 5 or 40 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	(1) Riding as a passenger in a school bus; (2) riding as a passenger in a motor vehicle made before July 1, 1966, that is not equipped with seat belts; (3) physically unable to use either a conventional child passenger restraint or a child restraint specifically designed for children with special needs; provided, however, that such condition is duly certified in writing by a physician who shall state the nature of the disability as well as the reasons such restraints are inappropriate; provided, further, that no such certifying physician shall be subject to liability in a civil action for the issuance of or for the failure to issue such certificate.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	This provision shall not apply to: (a) any child less than 12 years of age who is subject to the provisions of section seven AA; (b) any person riding in a motor vehicle manufactured before July 1, 1966; (c) any person who is physically unable to use seat belts; provided, however, that such condition is duly certified by a physician who shall state the nature of the handicap, as well as the reasons such restraint is inappropriate; provided, further, that no such physician shall be subject to liability in any civil action for the issuance or for the failure to issue such certificate; (d) any rural carrier of the United States Postal Service operating a motor vehicle while in the performance of his duties; provided, however, that such rural mail carrier shall be subject to department regulations regarding the use of seat belts or occupant crash protection devices; (e) anyone involved in the operation of taxis, liveries, tractors, trucks with gross weight of eighteen thousand pounds or over, buses, and passengers of authorized emergency vehicles.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 12 in the back of a pickup truck.			

MASSACHUSETTS

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
“Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

MICHIGAN

Child Passenger Safety Law

CPS Law Summary	The Michigan CPS law covers children through age 3. Children under the age of 4 must be in a child restraint system. Children ages 4-15 are covered by the Michigan Seat Belt Law and must be restrained in either the front or rear seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	3	na	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 4			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	10	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Children being nursed; does not apply if the motor vehicle being driven is a bus, school bus, taxicab, moped, motorcycle, or other motor vehicle not required to be equipped with seat belts under federal law or regulations.			

Seat Belt Law

Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all front-seat occupants must wear seat belts. Safety belts must be worn by back seat passengers ages 4-15.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; individuals unable to use belts for physical or medical reasons (with written verification from a physician); commercial or postal delivery vehicles; when there are more passengers than available seat belts.			

Rear of Pickup Law

Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in the back of a pickup truck.

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

MINNESOTA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Minnesota CPS law covers children through age 3. Children less than age 4 must be in a child restraint in the front or back seat. Children ages 4-10 are covered by the Minnesota Seat Belt Law and must be restrained in either the front or rear seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	3	na	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 4			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to have belts; emergency vehicles; police officers; vehicles for hire; children with medical conditions that prevent them from safely using a system.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by all front-seat occupants. Seat belts must be worn by back seat passengers ages 4-10.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	A person driving a passenger vehicle in reverse; a person riding in a seat in which all the seating positions equipped with seat belts are occupied by other people; a person who is in possession of a written certificate from a licensed physician verifying that because of medical unfitness or physical disability the person is unable to wear a seat belt; a person who is actually engaged in work that requires the person to emerge from and re-enter a passenger vehicle at frequent intervals and who, while engaged in that work, does not drive or travel in that vehicle at a speed exceeding 25 miles per hour; a rural mail carrier of the United States Postal Service while in the performance of duties; a person driving or riding in a passenger vehicle manufactured before January 1, 1965; a person driving or riding in a pickup truck while engaged in normal farming work or activity.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

MISSISSIPPI				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Mississippi CPS law covers children through age 7. Children less than age 8 must be restrained in the front or rear seat. Any child under the age of 4 must be in a child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	3	na	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 4			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; farm vehicles; unable to wear a seat belt system for medical reasons; rural letter carriers; utility meter readers; buses.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; farm vehicles; unable to wear a seat belt system for medical reasons; rural letter carriers; utility meter readers; buses.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

MISSOURI				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Missouri CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 4 or less than 40 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children ages 4-7 who weigh at least 40 pounds must be in a child restraint or booster seat unless they are 80 pounds or 4'9" tall. Children 8 and over or weighing at least 80 pounds or at least 4’9” tall are required to be in a booster seat. or seat belt Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required for children through age 15.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	79	56	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	When transporting children in the immediate family when there are more children than there are seating positions in the enclosed area of a motor vehicle, the children who are not able to be restrained by a child safety restraint device appropriate for the child shall sit in the area behind the front seat of the motor vehicle unless the motor vehicle is designed only for a front-seat area. The driver transporting children under this scenario shall not be in violation of the child seat restriction law. Does not apply to public carriers for hire or to students four years of age or older who are passengers on a school bus designed for carrying eleven passengers or more and which is manufactured or equipped pursuant to Missouri Minimum Standards for School Buses.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat passengers ages 16 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	10	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Unknown			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
“Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

MONTANA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Montana CPS law covers children through age 5. Children less than age 6 and less than 60 pounds must be in a child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	59	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 or 60 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	100	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Children who because of a physical or medical condition or body size cannot be placed in a child safety restraint.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	An occupant of a motor vehicle who possesses a written statement from a licensed physician that the occupant is unable to wear a seatbelt for medical reasons; if all seatbelts are being used by other occupants; operator of a motorcycle or a motor-driven cycle; occupant of a vehicle licensed as special mobile equipment; an occupant who makes frequent stops with a motor vehicle during official job duties. Is not applicable to a vehicle that is a motorbus, school bus, taxicab, moped, quadricycle, or motorcycle or is not required to be equipped with seat belts under 49 CFR 571 as it reads on January 1, 1984; or has a seating capacity as designated by the manufacturer of two people and there are two people 4 years of age or older in the vehicle.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

NEBRASKA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Nebraska CPS law covers children through age 17. Children less than age 6 must be properly restrained in a child restraint. Children ages 6-17 must be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Exceptions include: taxis; mopeds and motorcycles; motor vehicles 1963 model or earlier, not equipped with an occupant protection system; signed, written statement from physician stating restraint system would be harmful; authorized emergency vehicles			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Driver and front-seat passengers must use an occupant protection system. All people transported in a motor vehicle operated by a holder of a provisional operator's permit or a school permit must use an occupant protection system.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	A person who possesses written verification from a physician that the person is unable to wear an occupant protection system for medical reasons; a rural letter carrier of the United States Postal Service while performing his or her duties as a rural letter carrier between the first and last delivery points; and a member of an emergency medical service while involved in patient care. For purposes of this section, motor vehicle shall mean a vehicle required by section 60-6,266 to be equipped with an occupant protection system.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

NEVADA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Nevada CPS law covers children through age 5. Children less than age 6 and 60 pounds or less must be in a child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	60	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 or 61 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	500	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to have belts; taxicabs			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	unk	unk	unk
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles with an unladed weight of 6,000 pounds or more.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

NEW HAMPSHIRE				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The New Hampshire CPS law covers children through age 17. Children less than age 6 and less than 55 inches tall must be restrained in a child restraint. Children ages 6-17 or who are 55 inches or taller are required to be in a seat belt or booster seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	na	54	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 or 55 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	A person shall not be guilty of a violation of this section if the motor vehicle the person is driving is regularly used to transport passengers for hire, is a school bus weighing more than 10,000 pounds or is a school bus weighing less than 10,000 pounds that was manufactured without seat belts, or there is an individual education plan statement contraindicating the use of restraints, is a vehicle manufactured before 1968, is a motorcycle as defined in RSA 259:63, is an antique motor car or motorcycle as defined in RSA 259:4, or is being operated in a parade authorized by law or ordinance, provided that the parade vehicle is traveling at a speed of no more than 10 miles per hour.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	No requirements for drivers or occupants age 18 or older to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	na			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	0	na	na	na
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	na			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

NEW JERSEY				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The New Jersey CPS law covers children through age 17. Children less than age 8 and less than 80 pounds must use a child restraint or booster seat in a rear seat if a rear seat is available. Children ages 8-17 or who weigh at least 80 pounds are required to be in a seat belt or booster seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	79	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 80 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	100	Yes	Yes	Yes
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles manufactured before July 1, 1966; physician certified physical or medical reasons; vehicle not required to be equipped with seat belts under federal law; rural letter carriers; passenger automobile originally constructed with fewer seat belt systems necessary to allow the passenger to be buckled.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat passengers ages 18 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Drivers or occupants whose physical or medical condition prevents using a seat belt; Rural letter carriers while delivering mail; Automobiles manufactured prior to July 1, 1966, which do not have seat belts.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: All people are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

NEW MEXICO				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The New Mexico CPS law covers children through age 17. Children less than 1 must be in a rear-facing child restraint, in the rear seat of the vehicle when possible. Children ages 1-4 or who weigh less than 40 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children ages 5-6 or who weigh less than 60 pounds must be in a child restraint or booster seat. Children ages 7-17 must be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	59	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 and 60 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	5	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	If all seating positions equipped with seat belts are occupied.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	unk	unk	unk
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Individuals who have a written statement from a licensed physician; on-duty rural letter carriers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

NEW YORK				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The New York CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 7 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 7-15 must be in a seat belt or appropriate child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	6	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 7			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	21	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	No. Liveries, taxis, and public transportation buses are exempt from the occupant restraint law. However, children under the age of 4 must be restrained in a Federally approved car seat while riding on a school bus [Section 1229-c(11), NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law].			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat passengers ages 16 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Drivers or occupants whose physical or medical condition prevents using a seat belt; Rural letter carriers while delivering mail; Taxis; Liveries; Buses other than school buses.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: All people are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

NORTH CAROLINA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The North Carolina CPS law covers children through age 15. Children younger than age 8 and who weigh less than 80 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children who are at least age 8 or 80 pounds must be in a child restraint or seat belt. Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required for children through age 15. Children less than age 5 and less than 40 pounds must be in the rear seat in vehicles with active passenger side air bags.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	79	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 80 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	Yes	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Ambulances or other emergency vehicles; if all seating positions equipped with child restraints or seat belts are occupied; vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary for front seat; Secondary for rear seat			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	0	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	A driver or occupant whose physical or medical condition prevents using a seat belt; Rural letter carriers while delivering mail; newspaper delivery people; occupants of a motor home (as defined in N.C.G.S. 20-4.01(27)d2) other than the driver and front-seat passengers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Transportation of children less than age 12 in the open bed of a pickup truck or other open cargo area is prohibited			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

NORTH DAKOTA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The North Dakota CPS law covers children through age 17. Children younger than 7 and who are also less than 81 pounds or less than 58" must be in a child restraint. Children ages 7-17 must be in a seat belt or child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	6	79	56	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 7 or 80 pounds and 57 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Ambulances and other emergency vehicles.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat passengers ages 18 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	unk	unk	unk
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Drivers or occupants whose physical or medical condition prevents using a seat belt; rural letter carriers while delivering mail; drivers of farm husbandry or farm vehicles; people who cannot use a seat belt because all of the available belts are already being used.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

OHIO				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Ohio CPS law covers children through age 14. Children less than age 4 or who weigh less than 40 pounds must be in a child restraint. Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required for children through age 14.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	3	39	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 4 and 40 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary for children less than age 4. Secondary for ages 4-15			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Taxicabs; Public safety vehicles.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat occupants less than age 15 must also be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	30	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Postal and newspaper delivery people; people with an affidavit from a physician attesting that they cannot wear the belt for medical reasons.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 16 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

OKLAHOMA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Oklahoma CPS law covers children through age 12. Children less than age 6 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 6-12 must be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	School bus, taxicab, moped, motorcycle, or other motor vehicle not required to be equipped with seat belts pursuant to State or Federal laws; ambulance or emergency vehicle; vehicle in which all of the seat belts are in use; children who for medical reasons are unable to be placed in child restraints			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Individuals with a written statement from a physician; postal workers; farm vehicles, vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

OREGON				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Oregon CPS law covers children through age 15. Children must ride rear-facing until they are both age 1 and 20 pounds. Children at least age 1 and who weigh 21-40 pounds must be in a forward-facing child restraint. Children over 40 pounds must be in a booster seat until age 8 or 4'9" tall. Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required for children through age 15. (Effective 07/01/07)			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	56	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 57 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	77	Yes	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Privately owned commercial vehicles; taxicabs; vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts or safety harnesses at the time the vehicle was manufactured; if all seating positions in the vehicle are occupied by other people; law enforcement vehicles; newspaper and mail carriers; ambulances; utility meter readers; mass transit operators; solid waste or recyclable materials collectors; physical conditions or medical problems that prevent the use of restraints.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	77	Yes	Yes	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Privately owned commercial vehicles; taxicabs; vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts or safety harnesses at the time the vehicle was manufactured; if all seating positions in the vehicle are occupied by other people; law enforcement vehicles; newspaper and mail carriers; ambulances; utility meter readers; mass transit operators; solid waste or recyclable materials collectors; physical conditions or medical problems that prevent the use of restraints.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

PENNSYLVANIA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Pennsylvania CPS law covers children through age 17. Children less than age 4 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 4-7 and less than 80 pounds and less than 4'9" must be in a booster seat. Children ages 8-17 are covered by the PA Seat Belt Law and must be restrained in either the front or rear seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8			
Enforcement Type	Primary for children less than age 3. Secondary for children 4-17 years old.			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	100	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Medical			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Children ages 4-17 must use seat belts in rear seating positions. Rear-seat passengers ages 18 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	10	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles manufactured prior to July 1, 1966; occupants with certification from a physician; rural letter carriers; delivery drivers traveling less than 15 miles per hour.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

RHODE ISLAND

Child Passenger Safety Law

CPS Law Summary	The Rhode Island CPS law covers children through age 17. Children less than age 18 must be restrained in both the front and rear seats. Children less than age 7, less than 54 inches tall, and who weigh less than 80 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children who are at least age 7 or at least 54 inches tall or at least 80 pounds must be in a child restraint or seat belt. Use of a child restraint or seat belt is required though age 17. Children younger than 7 must be restrained in the rear seat when possible.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	6	79	53	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 7 or 80 pounds or 54 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	75	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	This subsection applies only to those motor vehicles required by Federal law to have seat belts.			

Seat Belt Law

Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	75	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	The provisions of subsections (b), (f) and (g) of this section shall not apply to a driver or passenger of: (1) A passenger motor vehicle manufactured before July 1, 1966; (2) a passenger motor vehicle in which the driver or passenger possesses a written verification from a licensed physician that the driver or passenger is unable to wear a seat seat belt system for physical or medical reasons. The verification time period shall not exceed 12 months at which time a new verification may be issued; (3) a passenger motor vehicle which is not required to be equipped with a safety seat belt system under federal laws; or (4) a passenger motor vehicle operated by a letter carrier of the United States Postal Service while performing the duties of a letter carrier.			

Rear of Pickup Law

Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 16 in the back of a pickup truck.

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

SOUTH CAROLINA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The South Carolina CPS law covers children through age 5. Children less than age 1 or who weigh less than 20 pounds must be in a rear-facing child restraint. Children ages 1-5 weighing 20- 39 pounds must be in a forward-facing child restraint . Children ages 1-5 weighing 40-80 pounds must be in a belt-positioning booster seat. Children less than 6 are not required to be in booster seats if they weigh more than 80 pounds or if they can sit with their backs against the car's seat and bend their legs over the seat edge without slouching. Children under 6 may not sit in the front seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	5	80	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 6 or 80 pounds or if belt fits			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	150	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Taxis; emergency vehicles when operating in an emergency situation; church, day care and school bus drivers; public transportation operators; commercial vehicles.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	People whose medical or physical conditions prevent using a seat belt; Medical or rescue personnel attending to patients; people riding in school, day care, or church buses; people riding in public transportation vehicles except taxis; people riding in vehicles on parade; United States mail carriers; drivers who make frequent stops for pick up of delivery; people occupying the rear seat unless the vehicle is equipped with a shoulder harness as well as a lap harness; or people in vehicles where all available seat belts are being used.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 15 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

SOUTH DAKOTA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The South Dakota CPS law covers children through age 17. Children less than age 5 and less than 40 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children ages 5-17 must be in a seat belt or child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	4	39	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 5 or 40 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Passenger car manufactured before 1966 that has not been equipped with seat belts; if all the child passenger restraint systems or seat belts are occupied.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat passengers ages 18 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Drivers or occupants whose physical or medical condition prevents using a seat belt; rural letter carriers while delivering mail; people delivering newspapers or periodical assigned on home delivery route; people riding in vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts under federal law; people riding in a passenger vehicle manufactured before September 1, 1973.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

TENNESSEE				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Tennessee CPS law covers children through age 15. Children under age 1 or weighing less than 21 pounds must be in a rear-facing child restraint in the rear seat, if available. Children ages 1-3 and weighing at least 21 pounds must be in a forward-facing child restraint in the rear seat, if available. Children ages 4-8 and less than 4'9" in height must be in a booster seat in the rear seat, if available. Children ages 9-12 or at least 4'9" in height are required to be in a seat belt with the rear seat being recommended. Children ages 13-15 are required to be in a seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	8	na	57	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 9 or 57 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	A person shall not be charged with a violation of this subsection (a) if such person presents a copy of the physician's prescription in compliance with the provisions of this subdivision (a)(4) to the arresting officer at the time of the alleged violation.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat passengers ages 16 and older are not required to be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	People who cannot wear a seat belt because of a physical disability; rural letter carriers of the U.S. Postal service while performing official duties; automobile dealership salespeople who test-drive 50 or more vehicles a day and where the test drives are within 1 mile of the dealership; utility workers while performing official duties; water, gas, and electric meter readers in the course of their employment; people who are in the process of delivering newspapers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 12 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

TEXAS				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Texas CPS law covers children through age 4. Children less than age 5 and less than 36 inches tall must be in a child restraint in both the front and rear seats. Children ages 6-16 are covered by the Texas Seat Belt Law and must be restrained in either the front or rear seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	4	na	35	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 5 or 36 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	200	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Emergency situations; Vehicle for hire; If all seating positions equipped with child restraints or seat belts are occupied.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat occupants less than age 17 must also be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Individuals who obtain a statement from a licensed physician that there is a medical reason that they not wear a seat belt; on-duty employees of the United States Postal Service; individuals delivering newspapers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 18 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

UTAH				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Utah CPS law covers children through age 16. Children less than age 5 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 5-15 must be in a seat belt or a child restraint.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	4	na	na	No
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 5			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	45	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles that were not equipped with seat belts at the time of purchase (pre-July 1, 1966 vehicles); drivers or passengers that possess a written verification from a licensed physician that the driver or passenger is unable to wear a seat belt for physical or medical reasons; the law only applies to seating positions required to be equipped with seat belts; the law does not apply to a passenger if all seating positions are occupied by other passengers.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	45	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles that were not equipped with seat belts at the time of purchase (pre-July 1, 1966 vehicles); drivers or passengers that possess a written verification from a licensed physician that the driver or passenger is unable to wear a seat belt for physical or medical reasons; the law only applies to seating positions required to be equipped with seat belts; the law does not apply to a passenger if all seating positions are occupied by other passengers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: All people are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

VERMONT				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Vermont CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 1 or less than 20 pounds must be in a rear-facing child restraint not installed in front of an active air bag. Children ages 1-7 and weighing more than 20 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children ages 8-15 must be in a child restraint or seat belt.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicle regularly used to transport passengers for hire except if owned or operated by a child care facility; vehicles manufactured without seat belts; or if ordered to evacuate people from a stricken area.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	unk	unk	unk
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Rural mail carriers; certain delivery vehicles; farm tractors; emergency vehicles; bus or taxi; of ordered to evacuate people from a stricken area.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

VIRGINIA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Virginia CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 8 must be in a child restraint. Children ages 8-15 must be in a child restraint or seat belt. (Effective July 1, 2007.)			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	50	Yes	Yes	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Taxicabs; school buses; executive sedans or limousines; if a licensed physician determines that the use of a child restraint system would be impractical by reason of the child's weight, physical unfitness, or other medical reason.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and front-seat passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Any person for whom a licensed physician determines that the use of a seat belt system would be impractical due to medical reasons; any law-enforcement officer transporting people in custody or traveling in circumstances which render the wearing of a seat belt system impractical; rural mail carriers for the United States Postal Service; taxi drivers; utility meter readers; or personnel of commercial or municipal vehicles engaged in the collection or delivery of goods or services.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: Drivers are prohibited from transporting children less than age 16 in the back of a pickup truck.			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

WASHINGTON				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Washington CPS law covers children through age 15. Children less than age 8 and less than 4'9" tall must be in a child restraint. Children ages 8-15 or at least 4'9" tall must be in a child restraint or seat belt. Children under age 13 must be in the back seat where it is practical to do so.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	56	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 57 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	86	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts; for hire vehicles; vehicles designed to transport sixteen or less passengers, including the driver, operated by auto transportation companies; vehicles providing customer shuttle service between parking, convention, and hotel facilities, and airport terminals; school buses.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	37	Yes	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Operators or passengers who possess written verification from a licensed physician that they are unable to wear a seat belt for physical or medical reasons; vehicle occupants for whom no seat belt is available when all designated seating positions are occupied. The state patrol may adopt rules exempting operators or occupants of farm vehicles, construction equipment, and vehicles required to make frequent stops.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

WEST VIRGINIA				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The West Virginia CPS law covers children through age 7. Children less than age 8 and less than 4'9" tall must be in a child restraint. Children ages 8-17 are covered by the West Virginia Seat Belt Law and must be restrained in either the front or rear seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	na	56	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 57 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	20	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	If all the seat belts are being used; vehicles operated for hire			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by driver and all front-seat occupants. Rear-seat occupants less than age 18 must also be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	No			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Vehicles designed to transport more than 10 people, including the driver; motorcycle, trailer or any motor vehicle that is not required under Federal law to have seat belts; rural mail carriers; physically disabled people.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

WISCONSIN

Child Passenger Safety Law

CPS Law Summary	The Wisconsin CPS law covers children through age 7. Children less than age 1 or less than 20 pounds must be in a rear-facing child restraint in the back seat. Children ages 1-3 or less than 40 pounds must be in a forward-facing child restraint in the back seat. Children ages 4-7 and who weigh 40-79 pounds and who are less than 57 inches must be in a booster seat.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	7	79	56	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 8 or 80 pounds or 57 inches			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	75	Yes	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Any child who because of a physical or medical condition or body size cannot be placed in a child seat restraint system, child booster seat, or seat belt; if the motor vehicle is a motor bus, school bus, taxicab, moped, motorcycle or is not required to be equipped with seat belts under sub. (1) or 49 CFR 571.			

Seat Belt Law

Seat Belt Law Summary	Seat belts must be worn by all drivers and front-seat occupants. All rear-seat occupants must wear a seat belt if a shoulder harness has been installed.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	10	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Emergency vehicles; vehicles on routes requiring more than 10 stops per mile; people who, because of a physical or medical condition, cannot be properly restrained in a seat belt; taxicabs; vehicles not required to be equipped with seat belts under 49 CFR 571; rural letter carriers and newspaper carriers; vehicles operated by a land surveying crew while conducting a land survey along or upon the highway; farm trucks or dual purpose farm trucks not being operated upon the highway			

Rear of Pickup Law

Rear of Pickup Provisions?	Yes: All people are prohibited from riding in the back of a pickup truck.

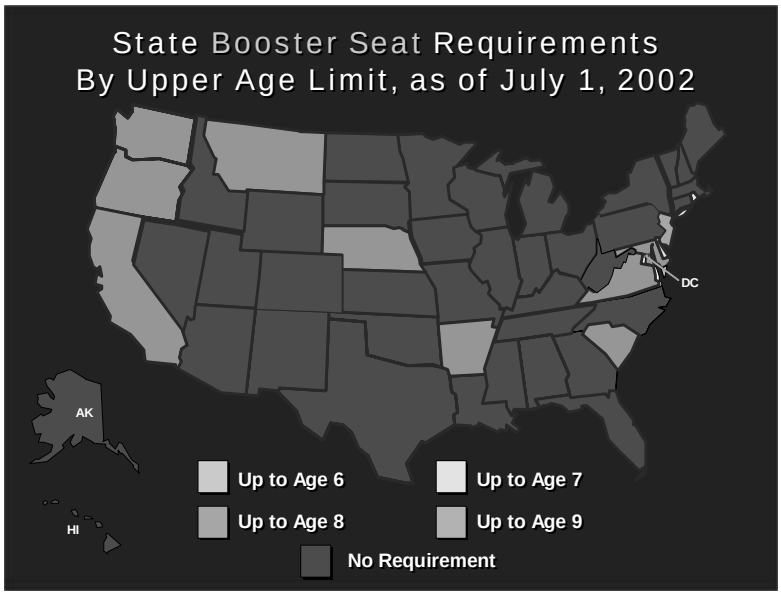
[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

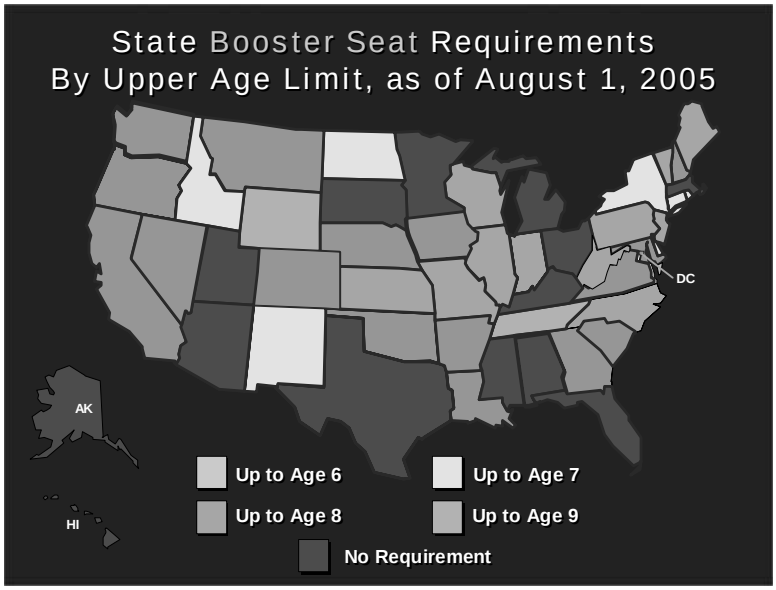
WYOMING				
Child Passenger Safety Law				
CPS Law Summary	The Wyoming CPS law covers children through age 8. Children less than age 9 and less than 81 pounds must be in a child restraint. Children must be in the rear seat in vehicles with more than one row of seats.			
Child Restraint Required[1]	Maximum Age	Maximum Weight	Maximum Height	"Booster" Provision?[2]
	8	80	na	Yes
Seat Belt Allowed	Age 9 or 81 pounds			
Enforcement Type	Primary			
CPS Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	60	No	No	No
CPS Law Exemptions	Vehicles not required to have seat belts; emergency and law enforcement vehicles; school buses; buses; if attending to the needs of the child; if parent or guardian and a licensed physician has determined that the weight or physical or medical condition of the child requires that the child not be secured in the restraint.			
Seat Belt Law				
Seat Belt Law Summary	Drivers and all passengers must be restrained.			
All in Rear Seat Covered?	Yes			
Enforcement Type	Secondary			
Seat Belt Law Penalties	Max. Fine 1st	Court Costs?	License Points?	Insurance Points?
	25	No	No	No
Seat Belt Law Exemptions	Any person who has a written statement from a physician; any passenger vehicle not required to be equipped with seat belts; carriers of the U.S. Postal Service performing duties as a postal carrier; any person properly secured in a child seat restraint system; any person occupying a seat in a vehicle in which the driver or passengers are using all operable safety restraints; vehicles designed to carry more than 11 people; emergency vehicles; motorcycles; any person occupying a seat in a vehicle in which all operable safety restraints are being used by the driver or passengers.			
Rear of Pickup Law				
Rear of Pickup Provisions?	No			

[1]Either in a child restraint with harness or booster seat.
[2]"Booster" Provision = "Yes" If child restraint/booster is required for children older than age 4 (5+) or heavier than 40 pounds.
"Booster" Provision = "No" if child is allowed to be in a seat belt if heavier than 40 pounds or if older than 4 years.

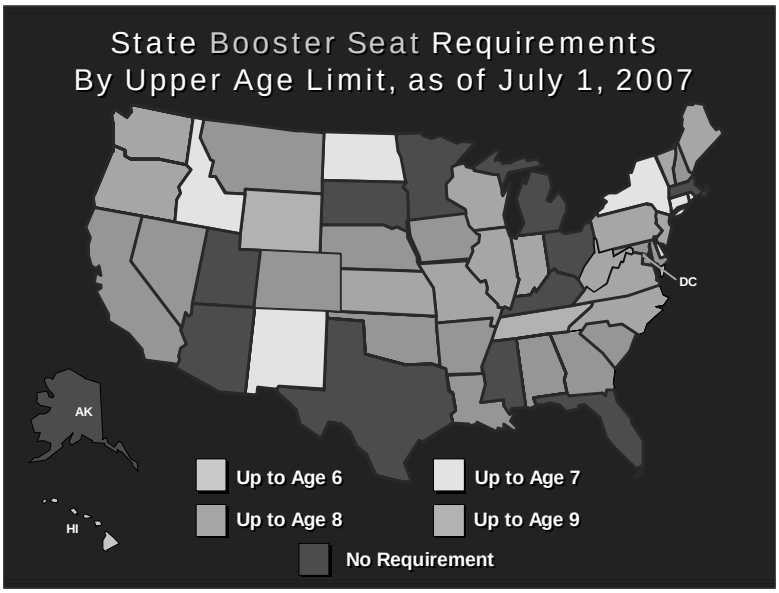
APPENDIX C:

BOOSTER SEAT REQUIREMENTS IN EFFECT BY STATE, BY UPPER AGE LIMIT, BETWEEN 2002 AND 2007





Source: NHTSA (2005); Safe Kids Worldwide (2007)



Source: NHTSA (2007)

APPENDIX D:

MESSAGE CONCEPTS FOR CONVINCING PARENTS/CAREGIVERS TO USE BOOSTER SEATS CONSISTENTLY AND PROPERLY

Concept A: Risk

Failure to secure children (age 4 to 8) properly in a booster seat results in far too many injuries and fatalities every year. These young children have outgrown their infant seats but do not yet fit safely and comfortably held by an adult's seat belt.

The risk to this child, when not protected by a booster seat is very high indeed, regardless of where in the car he/she may be riding. Because of the child's light weight, he may easily be thrown by sudden stops and turns, even at very low speeds and on short-distance trips.

A child secured by a booster seat is not only better protected but also more comfortable and able to enjoy the view. He is also less likely to engage in behaviors that are dangerous to him and distracting to adults.

Perhaps this failure to use booster seats is due to lack of awareness of the risks involved, to the perceived inconvenience of moving the seats from one vehicle to another or even to the opposition of the child to remaining in them. Responsible adults will see that the risks are just too great and will make up their minds to use booster seats every time, all the time for age-appropriate children.

Concept B: Enforcement

All over the country today, states and municipalities are stepping up efforts to enforce the laws requiring adults to secure their child passengers (ages 4 to 8) in booster seats.

Whether these laws are violated out of ignorance or indifference, the fact remains that children are being needlessly, sometimes fatally, injured every year. These terrible incidents might well have been avoided by proper use of booster seats.

Many state laws now mandate the issuance of tickets, fines and points against operators' licenses for failure to use booster seats as and when appropriate. And, police forces are renewing their efforts to see that these safety laws are obeyed.

Booster seats help prevent injuries and fatalities and make the trip more comfortable for children and adults alike. If these are not reasons enough, there is another reason to use boosters every time, all the time… it's against the law not to.

Concept C: It’s Easy

In any vehicular crash, even "minor" ones, children are especially susceptible to injury. Booster seats help protect children from injury and death in crashes by ensuring that the adult seat belt fits properly.

Today, there is no reason not to provide your young passengers with proper protection. There are now three types of booster seats available for purchase. Consumers can select the type that is appropriate for their seat belt system and for the age and size of their child.

Any of these three booster seats is equally easy to install; though it is necessary to learn to do so properly. Installation requires no tools and the seats can be readily moved from one vehicle to another in no more than a minute or two. Many of today's models are lightweight and easily carried. Perhaps best of all, placing and securing the child in the booster is likewise easy to do.

Booster seats can be purchased from many types of retailers. Like many products, booster seats come in various materials and colors and offer a range of features. Prices vary accordingly but, on average, boosters can be purchased for about $50.

Booster seats are easy to find, easy to install, easy on the child and easy on you.

Concept D: It's Your Duty

Young children ages 4 to 8 are among the most vulnerable passengers in a vehicle due to their small size and weight. It is a well-documented fact that booster seats are the best way to save these kids from injury and death in the event of a crash or even sudden turning or stopping.

Still, far too many adults are failing to protect their child passengers with booster seats, and for some very weak reasons. Some say that booster seats are too difficult to install and to move from one vehicle to another. That is simply not true. Today's seats are quick to install and easy to carry.

Maybe the weakest excuse for not using booster seats is that the child "won't" get in them or stay in them. First of all, booster seats today are designed to be comfortable. Second, the child should not have the final say on this matter. If your child demanded to be allowed to play in busy traffic, you would certainly forbid it. The use of booster seats should also be non-negotiable.

Being a Mom, a Dad or a Grandparent takes wisdom and willpower. It is your duty to do the right thing for your child. Keeping them from harm is the right thing, even when they are too immature to see it that way. Take charge. Show them the right way.

APPENDIX E:
CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY LAW: A GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Colorado

Child Passenger Safety Law

A Guide for Law Enforcement

	Under 1 yr	1-3 yrs	4-5 yrs	6-16 yrs
Less than 20 lbs	Rear-facing safety seat	Rear-facing safety seat		
20-40 lbs	Rear-facing safety seat	Front-facing safety seat	Booster (using lap and shoulder belt)	
Over 40 lbs Under 55"		Booster (using lap and shoulder belt)	Booster (using lap and shoulder belt)	Seat belt
Over 55"			Seat belt	Seat belt

Offense by Category

	Rear-facing	Front-facing	Booster	Seat belt
Statute: 42-4-236	42-4-236 (2) (a) (I)	42-4-236 (2) (a) (II)	42-4-236 (2) (b) (I)	42-4-236 (2) (b) (II)
Class: TIB Common Code: 574	Failed to provide/ properly use rear-facing child restraint system	Failed to provide/ properly use forward-facing child restraint system	Failed to provide/ properly use an approved child restraint system	Failed to provide/ properly use seat belt

www.carseatscolorado.com

1-877-LUV-TOTS

Safe Kids Denver Metro

1-877-588-8687
Denver Metro: 303-239-4625

CPS TEAM COLORADO

4 Steps

Colorado
Child Passenger Safety Law

1

Rear-facing in child safety seat until 1st birthday and 20 pounds

Infant

2

Forward-facing in child safety seat from 1st birthday and 20 pounds to 4th birthday unless 40 lbs

Toddler

3

Booster seat using vehicle lap and shoulder belt from 4th birthday until 6th birthday unless 55"

Booster

4

Vehicle seat belt from 6th birthday until 16th birthday in all seating positions

Seat Belt

Children all ages:
Riding in pickup cargo area not allowed

For more information on child passenger safety programs and fitting assistance throughout Colorado
Refer families to:

Safe Kids Denver Metro

www.carseatscolorado.com
1-877-588-8687
Denver Metro: 303-239-4625

CPS TEAM COLORADO

DOT HS 810 969
May 2008

U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

NHTSA
www.nhtsa.gov