Quick Facts on Booster Seats

**Why 4-8 Year-Old Children Need Booster Seats**

- Motor vehicle collisions are the single largest killer for children age 4-8 years. In 2000, over 1,189 children ages 14 and under died in motor vehicle crashes. In 2001, nearly 300,000 children ages 14 and under were injured in vehicle crashes.\(^1\)
- Riding unrestrained is the greatest risk factor for death and injury among child passengers. Among children ages 14 and under killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2001, 55% were not using safety restraints.\(^2\)
- Children age 4-8 years are particularly vulnerable. They make up 43% of child passengers, but sustain 55% of child passenger injuries.\(^3\)
- The total annual cost of motor vehicle occupant-related death and injury exceeds $25.8 billion for all children ages 14 and under. Every dollar spent on a child safety seat saves this country $32.\(^2\)

**How Booster Seats Help Solve the Problem**

- Using a booster seat protects kids from serious injury better than seatbelts alone. Booster seats reduce a child’s risk of injury by 59% compared to using only a seat belt and effectively protect children up to 7 years old from serious injury and death.\(^4\)
- Booster seats protect against head injury 4 times better than seatbelts.\(^5\)
- If all child passengers ages 14 and under were restrained properly, an estimated 182,000 serious injuries could be prevented annually.\(^2\)

**Current Booster Seat Use – Not Enough Children are Adequately Protected**

- Nationally, only 19% of children who should be restrained in booster seats use them.\(^2\)
- In King County, WA, only 33% of children who needed to use booster seats were using them in Spring 2002 (before the state booster seat law took effect).\(^6\)
- In Washington state during Spring 2002:
  - 14% of booster-size children in WA were completely unrestrained in the vehicle.
  - 29% were using only a seat belt.
  - 17% still remained in a forward-facing car seat with a harness, despite exceeding age and weight requirements.\(^5\)

**Booster Seat Use Can Increase with Parent and Community Involvement**

- The Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center has found that community-based campaigns significantly increase children’s use of booster seats.\(^7\)
- Children are more likely to use booster seats if their parents buckle up in a seat belt every time.\(^8\)

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\(^1\) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003  
\(^2\) National SAFE KIDS Coalition, 2003  
\(^3\) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
\(^4\) *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, June 2003  
\(^5\) *Pediatrics*, June 2000  
\(^6\) Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center, 2002.  
\(^7\) *JAMA*, February 2003  
\(^8\) *Pediatrics*, April 2003