



Canada
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Child safety seats used improperly 80 per cent of the time: Transport Canada



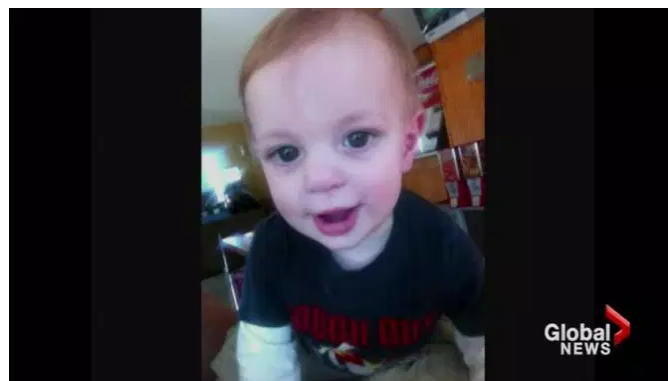
By Sean O'Shea Reporter
 Global News

WATCH ABOVE: Transport Canada says as many as 80 per cent of child safety restraints are not used properly. As Sean O'Shea reports, a woman who lost a child because her son wasn't buckled in correctly has advice: get the seats checked.



TORONTO — Parents know they should use safety seats to restrain their children in cars and the law requires it: but most mothers, fathers and caregivers aren't doing the job properly, according to Transport Canada.

Auto accidents account for the largest number of child deaths; but the agency says as many as 80 per cent of children aren't being correctly restrained in child seats or booster seats.



"People spend more time buying strollers and clothing than they do on car seats, which are the number one item of safety in a child's life," said David Drutz, chief of safety for Kiddie Proofers, a store focused on products designed with child safety in mind. "There's nothing more important."

Holly Wagner of Hammond, Louisiana knows that all too well.

On April 27, 2013, she got a phone call from a police officer that changed her life. Her boyfriend and two sons had been in an auto accident.

Her eldest son, Connor, had broken bones and would recover. But Cameron, approaching his first birthday, was fatally injured.

"He was ejected from the car at the time of the accident," Wagner told Global News, adding that Cameron's chest strap broke in the accident.

"I lost a son because of misuse."

After Cameron's death from a serious brain injury, Wagner devoted her life to raising awareness about the importance of installing child safety seats properly.

"I do not want anyone to go through what my family has gone through for two years," she said.

Laws require the use of seats for children. In Ontario, children who weigh less than nine kilograms (20 pounds) must be restrained in a rear-facing seat.

Children between nine and 19 kilograms (20 to 40 pounds) are required to be seated in forward-facing seats.

The law also requires children between 18 and 36 kilograms (40 to 80 pounds) to travel in an approved booster seat.

Under the criteria, children who are more than 145 centimetres in height may move to a regular seat as may children over eight years of age.

Drutz says parents are often to blame when their children are restrained in the wrong safety apparatus because of impatience.

"We're seeing people come in here and they're (saying) 'how quickly can I get my child out of a car seat'," he said.

"The problem is, you're taking children from extremely safe situations to very unsafe situations."

Most police services, many road safety agencies and several privately-run companies offer free or fee-based installations and inspections of child safety seats. But safety proponents advise caution about choosing the right person to give advice.

"Please make sure the person you are seeing is CPSAC certified," said Sharalyn Crossfield, referring to the Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada.

Crossfield is owner of Toronto-based Car Seat Maven, a company that provides installation and educational services. "CPSAC has the most current training for car seat safety in Canada and keeps its technicians held to very high standard." More than two years after her son Cameron died as a result of being improperly restrained, Wagner is on a mission to encourage parents not to leave the safety of their kids to chance.

"Just to save as many lives as I possibly can," she said.

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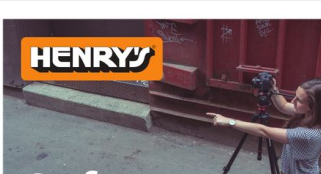
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