



# Child Restraints

## CHILD RESTRAINTS: THE FACTS

Child restraints reduce the likelihood of a fatal crash by:

Approx.  
**70%**  
among infants



Between  
**54%-80%**  
among young children



**53**

**countries have  
a child restraint  
law that:**

- is based on age, weight, height
- restricts children from sitting in the front seat



This covers

**1.2 billion  
people**

Forward facing child restraints reduce the risk of serious injury by almost 80% compared to children restrained only by seat-belts.

## Key issues

- Children in an appropriate restraint for their size and weight are significantly less likely to be killed or injured than unrestrained children, and are also less likely to be killed or injured than children using adult seat-belts.<sup>1</sup>
- Rear-facing restraints for babies and infants (under 1 year) have been shown to reduce the risk of death or injury by 90% compared to being unrestrained.<sup>2</sup>
- Appropriate legislation for child restraints fitting and use, together with consistent enforcement and public education is essential to reduce death and serious injury for young children in a crash or sudden stop.<sup>3</sup>
- Forward facing child restraints reduce the risk of serious injury by almost 80% compared to children restrained only by seat-belts. Children in booster seats, generally aged 4 to 10 years, have a 77% reduced risk of being injured in a crash compared to unrestrained children.<sup>4</sup>
- For low and middle income countries the cost of child restraints can be an inhibiting factor, so local solutions to encourage use needs to occur. Subsidies for child restraint purchase or schemes where these are made available at no cost or on loan have been shown to be effective in increasing usage rate.<sup>5</sup>
- Child restraints are incorrectly used in 15–80% of cases, because either the belt is not properly fastened, the child seat is incorrectly installed or the belt is placed around a child's neck, under the arms or across the abdomen.<sup>6</sup>

For more information on the importance of seat-belts for adults in addressing road deaths and serious injuries please refer to the GRSP seat-belt fact sheet above.



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## Key Messages

- Use of a correctly fitted child restraint that is appropriate for a child's size and weight significantly reduces the risk of death and serious injury in a crash or sudden stop.
- Laws requiring the correct fitting and use of appropriate child restraints are essential to reducing death and serious injury among young children in a crash or sudden stop.
- Child restraint laws must be effectively enforced to increase usage rates and reduce death and serious injuries.
- One of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets (3.6) is to halve the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2020. Appropriate legislation for child-restraint fitting and use, together with consistent enforcement and public education is essential to achieve this target.

## Components for Strong Child Restraint Policies

- Child restraint laws must require that only a correctly fitted child restraint of a good standard is used, and one which is appropriate for a child's size and weight.<sup>7</sup>
- Legislation for standards for child restraints and their use need to be consistent with internationally accepted good practice. Systems that are designed for securely fitting child restraints in cars, and are included in vehicle design standards, are proving to be simple to use and effective. The ISOFIX system is becoming the standard for vehicle design in many countries that allows for the child restraint to be secured by a plug-in attachment into a socket built into the vehicle.<sup>8</sup>
- Legislation needs to set penalties that are serious and enforced consistently enough to deter people from not using a correctly fitted and appropriate child restraint.

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## Components Required for Effective Enforcement

- Strong child restraint laws require effective, consistent and politically supported enforcement.
- Police enforcement must act as a strong deterrent to drivers driving with a child not seated in a correctly fitted child restraint that is appropriate for a child's size and weight.
- The public must have the perception they will be caught by police and receive a penalty if they are driving with a child not seated in a correctly fitted child restraint that is appropriate for a child's size and weight. This is achieved through enforcement campaigns that are:
  - *highly visible, such as through the use of strategically located checkpoints*
  - *repeated and conducted in a widespread way so that there is a perception that it is possible to be caught 'anywhere at anytime'.*
  - *Supported by penalties that are always applied to anyone driving with a child not using a child restraint*
  - *well-publicized before, during and after.*
- Targeted public education and social marketing campaigns, when conducted together with effective police enforcement can help increase child restraint usage rates. These campaigns should target parents of infants and young children, as well as those expecting the birth of a child.
- It is necessary to have a system for collection and analysis of data on child restraint usage rates to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programmes, and for planning purposes.

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## References

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