

Passenger Safety Project: Child Passenger Safety

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXTENSION EDUCATION

PROPER USE OF CHILD SAFETY SEAT RESTRAINTS

- Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death from accidental injury among children ages 14 and under.
- The total annual cost of deaths and injuries of motor vehicle occupants who are children ages 14 and under in Texas is approximately \$229 million.
- Although seat belts and car seats are the single most effective tool in reducing deaths and injuries, less than half of children killed in vehicle crashes in Texas were known to be restrained. Minority children are at a greater risk of being unrestrained.
- Misuse and non-use of car seats remains high, with children ages 5 to 9 having the lowest usage rate, at just 27.7% correctly restrained.
- Research shows that car seats, when used properly, reduce the risk of fatal injury by up to 71%.
- Most parents think they are using car seats correctly, but studies show that an estimated 66% of car seats and 20% of booster seats are misused in a way that can reduce their effectiveness.

AGRILIFE EXTENSION'S RESPONSE

- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's Passenger Safety Project works to reduce childhood deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes by increasing the use of car seats across Texas.
- The project conducts the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's 3½-day Child Passenger Safety Technician Course, which trains and certifies technicians to assist parents with car seat education.

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- Car seat checkup events are conducted primarily in underserved rural areas to educate parents on the correct usage of car seats.
- The Passenger Safety Project has overseen the inspection of more than 43,400 car seats in Texas, 99% of which were being used incorrectly or were unsafe or inappropriate for the age and weight of the child.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- Proper use of car seats reduces the risk of injury and death, which in turn reduces medical costs, avoids the loss of future earnings, and improves quality of life. For each new car seat distributed, economic benefits are estimated at \$3,139 per child age 0 to 4 years and \$3,527 per child age 4 to 7 years. For every misuse of a car seat that is corrected, economic benefits are estimated at \$831.
- For the 3,394 safety seats inspected in 2024, the economic benefit is an estimated \$7.0 million. Since the program's inception in 1999, the total economic benefit of the Passenger Safety Project is estimated at \$62.5 million.