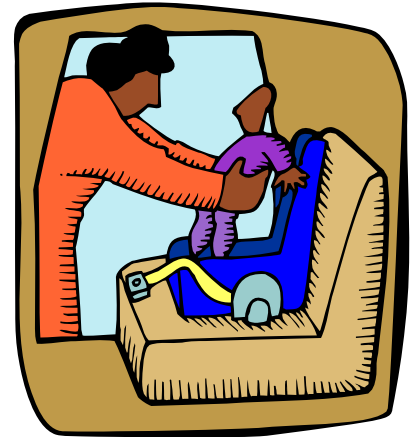




Motor Vehicle Crash Injuries among Children and Car Seat Use

- In Oklahoma, nearly 15 children under 5 years of age die each year in a motor vehicle crash and many more are injured. The Oklahoma death rate is 40% higher than the national rate for this age group.
 - In 2004, over 73% of children 5 and under who died in a vehicle crash were not in a child restraint.
- Because of their delicate bone structures, infants and toddlers are extremely susceptible to injury in motor vehicle crashes.
 - In a collision of only 30 miles per hour, a 10-pound baby not in a car seat will be thrown into the dashboard or windshield with a force of 300 pounds. That's like throwing the baby off a 3-story building.
 - A 100-pound mother who is not wearing her seat belt and is holding the baby in her lap becomes a 3,000-pound force – more than enough to crush the child in her arms against the dash. No man or woman can continue to hold a baby in their arms during a crash, even if the car is only traveling 15 miles per hour.
 - At just 25 miles per hour (the speed limit in many neighborhoods), a 30-pound child not in a car seat will be thrown forward with the force of 750 pounds during an emergency stop.
- Many injuries also occur during non-crash situations, when a child strikes the vehicle interior during a sudden stop, turn, or swerve. Non-crash injuries can be severe and are most common among unrestrained 1-4 year olds.
- A common cause of death and injury to children in automobiles is being crushed by adults who are not wearing seat belts. In fact, 1 out of 4 serious injuries to passengers are caused by occupants being thrown into each other.



Prevention

- The Oklahoma Child Restraint Law requires that all children 0-5 years of age be buckled in a car seat; children 6 years of age are required to use a car seat or seat belt. Car seat use in Oklahoma was 87% in 2006.
- Car seats are 67-71% effective in preventing serious injury or death.
- *Children* mimic their parents, so setting a good example by *always* wearing a *seat belt* could encourage the "seat belt habit" for a child and possibly save that child from serious injury or death in a crash.
- Make it a rule that the vehicle does not move until everyone is restrained in a seat belt or car seat.