



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5534

www.adph.org

Motor vehicle crashes the No. 1 killer of children in Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lynn Williams
(334) 206-5539
lwilliams@adph.state.al.us

Motor vehicle crashes are the No. 1 killer of children in Alabama. During National Child Passenger Safety Week, the Alabama Department of Public Health wants parents to focus on protecting their children on Alabama's highways by securing them in the proper seats every time, every trip, every day.

According to 2003 observational surveys, child restraint use was 87 percent in the state, however studies show that four out of five seats are improperly installed.

"Although Alabamians are using child safety seats, more than half of the children that die in Alabama die as a result of traffic crashes," said State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson. "It's important that parents not only use child safety seats, but that they make sure that they are correctly installed."

Placing children in age-appropriate restraints that are correctly installed can reduce serious injury and death by 71 percent.

"To correctly protect their children, parents should restrain them based on their age and weight. And all children in all forms of restraint should be in the back seat," said Nancy Wright, Director of the Injury Education Branch at the Alabama Department of Public Health.

FOUR STEPS FOR CHILD RESTRAINT.

- * Rear-facing infant seats- birth to at least age 1 and less than 20 pounds.
- * Forward-facing child safety seats- age 1 to about age 4 and 20 to 40 pounds.
- * Booster seats- about ages 4 to 8 and under 4-feet-9-inches tall and 40 to 80 pounds.
- * Lap and shoulder belts- at least age 8 or over 4-feet-9-inches tall and the child is able to sit with his back firmly against the seat, knees bent over the seat and feet touching the floor.

Currently, there are 19 permanent inspection sites statewide with certified child passenger safety specialists and instructors to assist parents in the correct installation of car seats. Funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs supports these efforts.

For more information on child passenger safety and to find out the best safety restraint use according to a child's size and age call 1-800-504-9768.

2/06/04