Are Iowa Children Buckled Up?

Results from Iowa’s 2023 Child Passenger Restraint Survey

91.7% of children were restrained by any means.
93.3% of drivers wore seatbelts.

Proper Child Passenger Restraint Use by Community Size

- 1-year-olds or younger
  - 100% restraint
  - A child 1 year or younger and weighing <20 lbs must be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system.

- 2 to 5 year olds
  - 76.2% restraint
  - A child from age 2 to 5 years old must be secured in a child restraint system.

- 6 to 13 year olds
  - 88.9% restraint
  - A child from age 6 to 13 must be secured in a child restraint system or by a safety belt.

- 14 to 17 year olds
  - 80.1% restraint
  - A child from age 14 to 17 must be in a child restraint system or by a safety belt.

84.5% were properly restrained in accordance with Iowa law.

7.4% Decrease in Properly Restrained Children in 2023 Compared to 2022
14.2% Decrease in Unrestrained Children in the Back Seat in 2023 Compared to 2022

Key Findings

- Children between the ages 2 to 5 had the highest rate of being improperly restrained (booster or seatbelt only instead of a child safety seat).
- The lowest proper restraint use rates occurred in the small urban communities (10,000-49,999), these communities also had the lowest restraint rates by any means.
- 2023 had the lowest rate of restrained children by any means in the past 5 years.
- Observed driver restraint rates in 2023 decreased by 6.5% with the previous year (93.3% vs 99.8%).

Implications

The greatest potential impact for efforts to increase restraint are in small urban and rural areas and among young children, especially toddlers.

We surveyed 36 communities ranging in a population from 1,400 to 217,000.