How North Dakota Kids Ride
Devils Lake

Introduction

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury for North Dakota children. Fortunately, most deaths and injuries can be prevented with the proper use of car safety seats, booster seats and seat belts.

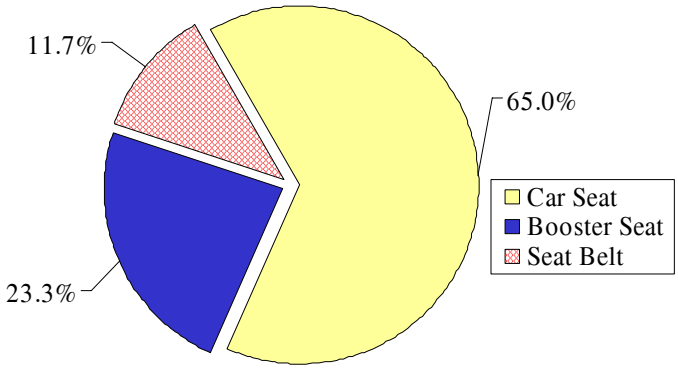
Observation Surveys

In 2006, the North Dakota Department of Health conducted an observation survey in Devils Lake to collect data on restraint use by children younger than 11. The surveys were conducted by certified child passenger safety instructors at locations where vehicles came to a complete stop, allowing the observer to peer into the vehicle and record observations. Similar surveys were done in nine other communities across the state.

Key Findings – Devils Lake

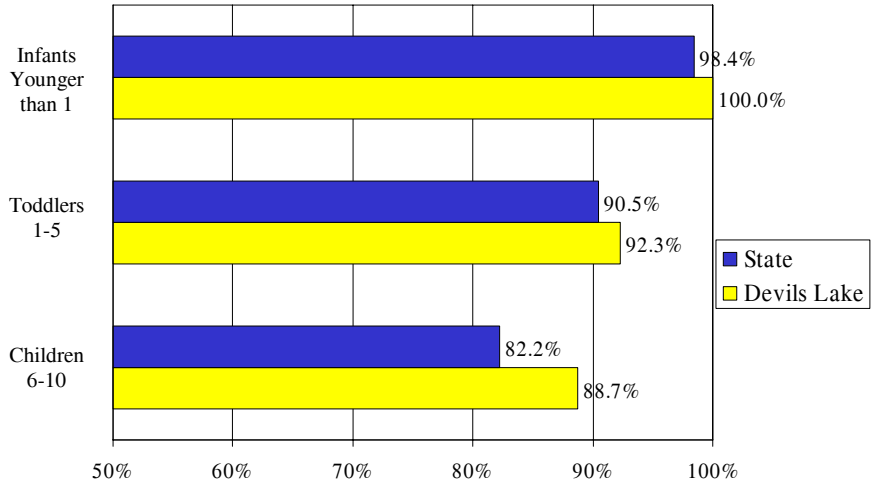
- 100 percent of infants younger than 1 were riding in a car safety seat.
- 92.3 percent of toddlers ages 1 through 5 were buckled in a car seat, booster seat or seat belt.
- 88.7 percent of children ages 6 through 10 were buckled in a seat belt, booster seat or car seat.

Type of Restraint – Toddlers Ages 1 through 5



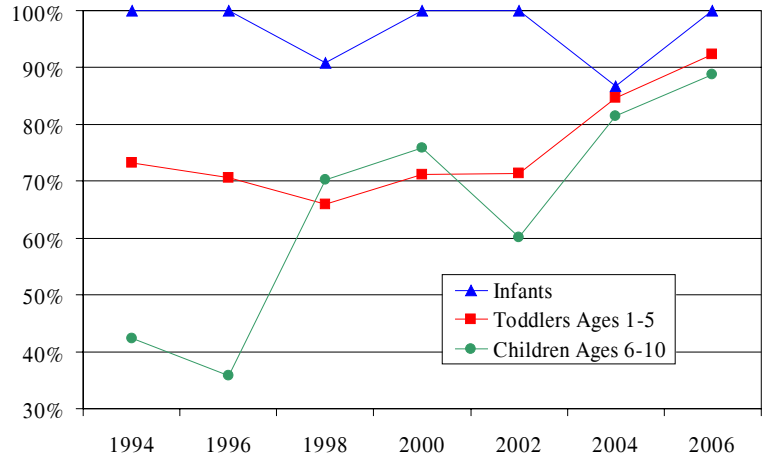
Worth noting is the percentage of toddlers ages 1 through 5 who were riding in a seat belt. North Dakota law requires children younger than 7 to use a car seat or booster seat unless they are more than 80 pounds and 4'9" tall.

Devils Lake Restraint Use Compared to State



Year-to-Year Comparison – Devils Lake

* The following graph shows changes in restraint use by infants, toddlers ages 1 through 5 and children ages 6 through 10 between 1994 and 2006.



* Because of the small number of infants observed, fluctuations between years may not be significant in this category.

Tips for Buckling Up Kids

- Babies should ride rear-facing as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, babies should ride rear-facing until they are at least age 1 and weigh at least 20 pounds.
- Children who outgrow their rear-facing seats (at least 1 year of age and at least 20 pounds) should ride in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat. Most seats with a harness have an upper weight limit of 40 pounds, but some newer models may have higher weight limits.
- Children who outgrow their forward-facing seat should ride in a booster seat until the vehicle safety belt fits properly (about 4'9" and 80 pounds). The safety belt fits properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest.
- Children more than 4'9" tall should use a properly fitted safety belt.
- Children 12 and younger should ride in the back seat – even if the vehicle doesn't have airbags.

Resources

North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Injury Prevention and Control: www.ndhealth.gov
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nhtsa.dot.gov or www.boosterseat.gov
Safe Kids Worldwide: www.safekids.org
SafetyBeltSafe USA: www.carseat.org
Safe Ride News: www.saferidenews.com