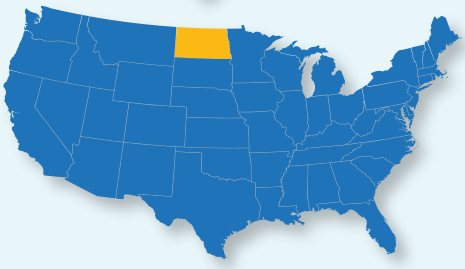
2015 North Dakota Child Passenger Safety Observation Surveys



Nationally, **car crashes** are a leading cause of death for children.

In **North Dakota**, **87%** of the children younger than 11 years of age were observed using a car seat or seat belt in the vehicle.

85% were observed to be traveling in the back seat.

What are ND Child Passenger Safety Observation Surveys?

In 2015, the North Dakota Department of Health observed child occupants younger than age 11 in ten of the largest cities in North Dakota. The surveys were conducted at locations where vehicles came to a stop, allowing the trained observer to look into the vehicle and record observations. The point-in-time observations are used to determine:

- Child seating location - front or back seat
- Child restrained or unrestrained
- Driver restraint status
- How infants were restrained (birth to 1)
- How toddlers were restrained (1-5 years)
- How children were restrained (6-10 years)

How can communities use this observation data?

- Use the data to improve any weaknesses observed in the community.
- Use the data to reinforce the positive behaviors observed in the community.
- Share this document with others in the community. Pass along child passenger safety best practice information to caregivers in the city and county.

What is recommended for child passenger safety best practices?

- Children younger than 13 should ride in the back seat.
- **REAR-FACING:** Children should ride rear-facing until at least 2 years of age (following car seat instructions)
- **FORWARD-FACING:** When children are at least 2 years of age or have outgrown the highest rear-facing limits of their car seat, they may ride forward-facing in a car seat with a harness. Use the seat until the child reaches the harness's highest weight limit allowed by the manufacturer.
- **BOOSTERS:** When children have outgrown the harness in their forward-facing car seat, they may be moved to a booster. The child should be at least 40 pounds and at least 4 years of age. Keep the child in the booster until about 4'9" tall.
- **SEAT BELT:** Children should use a seat belt when it fits over the body correctly. For a seat belt to fit properly, the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs and be snug across the shoulder and chest. It should not lie on the stomach or across the neck.

Where can you get more information?

Call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2286 or **visit** http://www.safercar.gov/parents/index.htm or http://www.ndhealth.gov/injuryprevention/childpassenger/

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

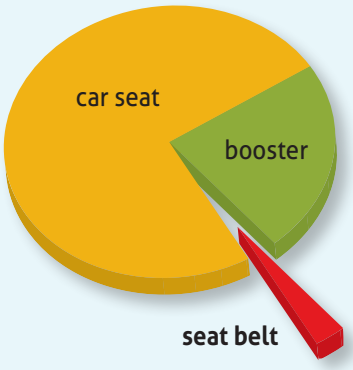
NDDOT North Dakota Department of Transportation

See Valley City Data

Child Passenger Observation Survey Results in Valley City:

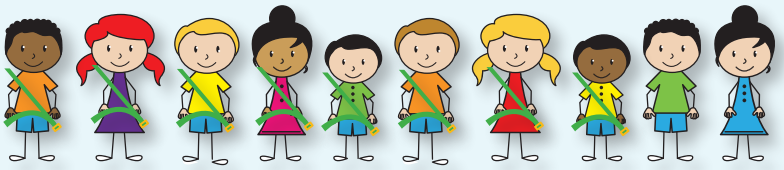
Overall restraint use: **89%** in Valley City.

Overall restraint use in North Dakota is **87%**.

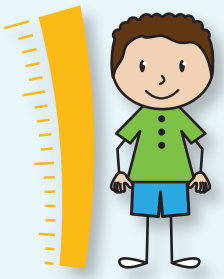


While 94% of toddlers* were observed in some form of restraint, **3% were using a seat belt**. Best practice for this age group is to travel in a car seat or booster seat. It is against the North Dakota law for children **younger than seven years** to ride in a seat belt only.

84% of children were restrained:**



84% were in a seat belt (8 out of 10)



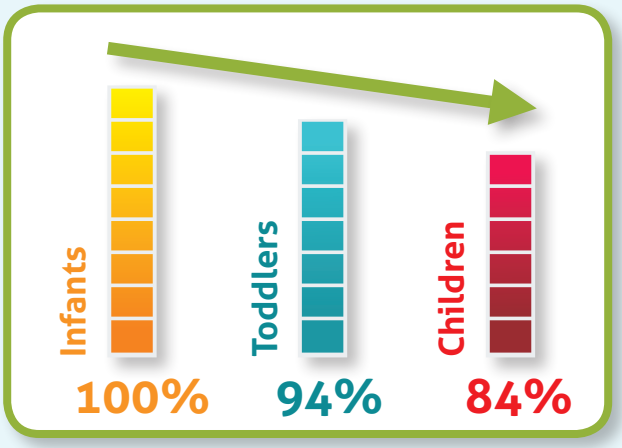
Children** in this age group are safer in a booster seat and should not ride in a seat belt until they are **4'9"** or until the seat belt fits them low on the hips and centered across the chest.

13

The **back seat is the safest place** for children under 13 years old, with or without a front air bag.

28% of children** were observed in the front seat **(3 out of 10)**.

Restraint use decreases as children age in Valley City. The decreases were observed in all 10 surveys conducted in North Dakota. This is alarming because injuries and fatalities due to motor vehicle crashes increase as children become teenagers.



Survey Details

*Toddlers = estimated ages 1-5 years
**Children = estimated ages 6-10 years