

DRIVE SMART

Colorado Springs

Getting More Kids in Booster Seats

DRIVE SMART Colorado Springs; 719-533-8424

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In October 2000, DRIVE SMART Colorado Springs (DSCS) started a Booster Seat Promotion Project with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Colorado was one of only three states to receive funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Colorado Springs was chosen because of the quality of the existing traffic safety resources in the community. The three-year project will run from October 2000 to September 2003.

DRIVE SMART Colorado Springs has been working with other local agencies, including El Paso County Department of Health and Environment, Colorado Springs SAFE KIDS Coalition, Life Support Center, Colorado Springs Police Department, and School District #11.

Community Readiness

To plan the booster seat program, a health behavior change model was used. DSCS worked with CDPHE and the Colorado Injury Control Research Center (CICRC) at Colorado State University to apply the Community Readiness Model to booster seat use in Colorado Springs. The Model identified that in 2001, Colorado Springs was in the “preplanning” stage of readiness. This means the community recognizes the problem and has identified the leaders. Booster seat promotion efforts are not focused or detailed. The Model also helped define our target groups (physicians, parents, community leaders), refine the message (emphasize the protective benefits of boosters, let parents know kids will accept boosters, boosters aren’t expensive) and develop strategies (use media, use kids as the messenger, show older kids in boosters).

CICRC will conduct community interviews again in 2003 to help determine how the community moved through the stages of the model toward increased booster seat use.

Project Plans

In February 2001, DSCS began to develop projects to promote booster seat use in the community. The following pages contain the main projects and findings.

Why Do Children Ages 4-8 Need to Use Booster Seats?

- Car crashes are the number one killer of children.
- A seatbelt that doesn't fit correctly may not protect your child in a crash.
- A child in a seatbelt may slip out. Some kids have been thrown from the car.
- Booster seats used correctly, with both lap and shoulder belts, save lives.



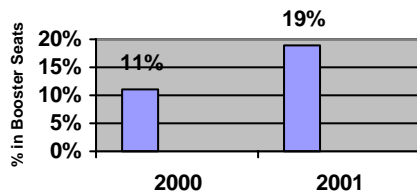
Community Observations

Project:

DSCS volunteers observed over 400 children, ages 4-8, at 27 sites in Colorado Springs.

Findings:

Observed Booster Seat Use



- ✓ There was a significant increase from December 2000 to December 2001.
- ✓ 75-88% of the children were restrained in some manner (car seat, seat belt), and 23% of those children were using booster seats.
- ✓ Booster seat use was a little higher in mini-vans and when females were driving.
- ✓ **Driver use of a seatbelt was very important!** If the driver wore a seatbelt, 90% of the kids were restrained and 21% were using a booster. If the driver was NOT wearing a seatbelt, 34% of the kids were restrained, and 8% were using a booster seat.

Comparison:

- ✓ In a comparison community, a booster seat use observational survey revealed an increase from 3 to 6%. *This increase was not significant.*
- ✓ In a 2001 statewide survey, adults responded that 15% of children ages 4-8 used a booster seat. Booster seat use was higher in 4-5 year olds as compared to 6-8 year olds.
- ✓ In nationwide surveys, booster seat use is estimated at 10-13%.



Memorial Hospital Data

Findings:

From January 1999-April 2001, 31 children between the ages of 4-8 were admitted to the hospital due to injuries related to motor vehicle crashes.

- ✓ 23% of the children were not restrained!
- ✓ 61% were restrained in seatbelts.
- ✓ Only 6% were restrained in either a car seat or a booster seat.

Parent & Life Support Center Surveys

Project:

DSCS surveyed parents at two elementary schools. The Life Support Center also surveyed clients as they received a booster seat.

Findings:

The parents reported that their 4-8 year old children used some type of restraint 94-96% of the time and 16-36% of the children used booster seats.

Parents knew about booster seats, thought their kids would use them, and talked about booster seats with others. However, 27-39% of parents still felt it was safe for a child over 4 years old to use just a seatbelt.

Where do parents say they get their best information on booster seats?

<u>Parents</u>	<u>Life Support Clients</u>
Doctor/Nurse	Life Support Center
Newspaper	Doctor/Nurse
Family	TV
Friends	Family
Health Department	Friends

Focus Groups

Project:

DRIVE SMART worked with KezziahWatkins Communications to conduct focus groups with parents and children.

Findings:

- Parents and students are aware of the role of booster seats in child safety.
- There is a lot of confusion about proper booster seat use – especially details about the age and height requirements.
- Most parents said they stopped using a booster seat when their child was in first grade (age 5-7). This is when kids notice peer pressure and don't like using a booster seat.
- Many children said they liked riding in booster seats:

“I can see out the window better.”

“The seat belt fits better and doesn't rub my neck.”



Community Projects

Radio Campaign: The radio campaign, promoting booster seats, has aired approximately 1785 times on 17 stations in September - October 2001 and May 2002. It will also air in September 2002. DSCS worked with the Southern Colorado Organization of Radio (SCOR) to arrange for the excellent airtime. The spots feature Katie Jean, a booster-age child, explaining booster seats to adults.

Billboard Campaign: The billboard campaign ran from December 25, 2001 through February 28, 2002. The 13 billboards and 12 illuminated bus shelters were seen by approximately 262,800 people daily.



Results: We surveyed people who showed up at car seat checkpoints in 2002. Fifty two percent remembered seeing the billboards and 40% remembered hearing the radio spots.

Life Support Center: Approximately 400 low-income clients received a free booster seat, educational material and assistance with proper installation of the seat in their vehicle.

Car Seat Checkpoints: DSCS coordinated checkpoints with Colorado Springs SAFE KIDS Coalition. From October 2000-March 2002, 192 kids ages 4-8 were checked and 36% were in booster seats. Sixty-two (97%) of the kids in seat belts were identified as needing booster seats. Those families were given information and/or a free booster seat.



Work With Two District #11 Elementary Schools: DSCS met with Mark Twain and Vera Scott schools and planned activities. Informational brochures went out to all families in May 2001. DSCS and their volunteers set up a display and distributed a total of 210 free booster seats and educational brochures to parents and caregivers in March and May 2002.

Booster Seat Distribution: Over 900 free booster seats have been distributed throughout El Paso County to parents and caregivers of children ages 4-8.

Booster Seat Brochure Distribution: Approximately 20,000 educational brochures (17,800 in English and 5,200 in Spanish) have been distributed throughout the community.



Work With the Medical Community:

Dr. Barbara Towne, a local pediatric surgeon, wrote a letter to her colleagues stressing the importance of booster seat use among children ages 4-8. Two different letters went out to over 900 physicians inviting them to take advantage of a free booster seat display and brochures for their offices. Dr. Towne and DSCS provided three presentations to physician groups. We know that health care providers have an important influence on motivating families to use booster seats.

Work With the Hispanic Community: Hispanics comprise 11% of the Colorado Springs population, and the state motor vehicle mortality rate for Hispanics is significantly higher than the rate for the other ethnic/racial groups. DSCS pulled together a task force with some new members from the Hispanic community. The first activity was a booster seat booth at the Cinco de Mayo (May 5, 2002) celebration. Forty free booster seat coupons were distributed to families and twelve parents redeemed the coupon for a free booster seat.

Work With Retail Stores: DSCS sent a letter to the local retail stores to let them know about the booster seat campaign and to urge them to stock a variety of booster seats.

Work With Law Enforcement:

The Colorado Springs Police Department instituted an instructional class for drivers cited for child passenger violations. The DSCS booster seat brochure is available at the CSPD class. Since October 1, 2001, approximately 60 people have attended the class.



Future Plans

In 2002-2003, **DRIVE SMART Colorado Springs** will continue with the booster seat program.

We will provide:

- Two waves of a radio campaign
- Distribution of educational materials
- Community checkpoints
- Assisting health care providers in raising patient awareness
- Distribution of free booster seats in the community
- Ensuring availability of low cost seats in retail stores

In addition we will target three specific groups:

- Parents through the child care centers
- Designing messages specifically for the Hispanic population.
- Parents whose children attend Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Department programs

PLUS

DRIVE SMART Colorado Springs will help publicize the new Booster Seat Law



**“We want to see
more Colorado
Springs kids in
Booster Seats!!”**

Maile Gray,
DRIVE SMART Colorado Springs Consultant



Colorado’s “New” Booster Seat Law

Colorado’s child restraint law was strengthened in 2002 by requiring 4 and 5 year olds to ride in booster seats. The new section of the law takes effect on August 1, 2003 and officers will give a warning, not a citation, to drivers for one year. Beginning on August 1, 2004, officers will issue actual citations for violation of the law. The fine is \$56.

The law includes the following requirements:

- ⓐ Children less than 1 year old and weighing less than 20 pounds must be properly restrained in a rear-facing child restraint system. Children ages 1 through 3, weighing more than 20 pounds but less than 40 pounds, must be properly restrained in a forward-facing child restraint system. This updates Colorado’s original child safety seat law passed in 1984.
- ⓐ Children who are 4 or 5 years old and less than 55” tall must be properly restrained in a child booster seat or with a child safety belt- positioning device.
- ⓐ Children ages 6 through 15 years must be properly restrained in a seat belt.