



Joseph M Colella  
1822 N Greenleese Dr  
Frederick, MD 21701  
301-466-8140  
ColellaSafety@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 18, 2010

For more information contact:  
Joseph M Colella  
301-466-8140 or [ColellaSafety@gmail.com](mailto:ColellaSafety@gmail.com)

## 18% More Child Passengers Killed in 2009 than in 2008

*Detailed analysis of NHTSA statistics shows a significant increase in deaths from age 1 to 6, despite a reported 3% decrease for all children through age 14*

A detailed look at NHTSA data shows that a 59 more young children ages 1 through 6 died on America's roadways in 2009 than in 2008. In 2009, 386 children in that age group were killed, compared with 327 in 2008. While legislation, education, enforcement, and technology have contributed to an overall reduction in motor vehicle occupant fatalities, including the NHTSA-reported 3% decrease for *all* children ages 0-14, the same data show this 18% increase for children ages 1-6.

"With high misuse rates and unacceptable nonuse of child restraints, we know that these horrific tragedies can usually be prevented through correct restraint selection, installation and use," claims Joseph M Colella, director of Traffic Safety Projects. "A child's death affects more than just the child. It takes a toll on the family, friends, community, and beyond."

Colella began his occupant protection advocacy work in 1994, following the death of his 3-year-old niece, Dana Hutchinson.

Motor vehicle crash injuries are the leading cause of death for children ages 3-14. Decreases in child deaths were seen for children under age 1 and ages 7 through 14. Using common statistical age groupings for comparing 2008 and 2009 fatalities:

<1	- 15%
1-3	+ 10.1%
4-7	+11.8%
8-14	-7.5%

Estimated non-fatal injuries decreased for all statistical age groupings.

"From the late 1990s through the early 2000s, there was a great deal of focus on and resources created for educating the parents and caregivers of young children – and these empowerment efforts led to dramatic increases in the number of lives saved," says Colella. "In the past few years, however, new traffic safety priorities have reduced earmarked Federal and private funding to almost nothing. Other priorities are certainly important, but not at the expense of our youngest children."

Previous child passenger safety funding was approved and renewed by Congress and made available to states as 2003(b) monies. Incentive grants were then available only to states with eligible booster seat laws as Section 2011 monies. Both earmarked funding programs have expired, giving state agencies more discretion with priority guidance from NHTSA.

"New parents are born every day, and this data shows that we need to prioritize buckling up our children correctly," says Colella. "These 59 additional children lost show us that families need to pay close attention to properly protecting themselves. And perhaps they can show our nation that we need to continue funding and enhancing educational resources for parents."

For child passenger safety information, caregivers should call the Auto Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236 or visit <http://nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS>. To find a local child safety seat inspection site, caregivers can visit [www.nhtsa.gov/cps/cpsfitting/index.cfm](http://www.nhtsa.gov/cps/cpsfitting/index.cfm).

## SIDEBAR: Restraint Selection Guidelines

No one is safe until everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled. Follow all vehicle and child seat instructions to ensure correct selection, use and safety.

### Face the Rear

Children should ride in rear-facing child seats until they reach the height or weight limits of a rear-facing convertible seat – at least until they are 12 months old and weigh 20 pounds. Research shows that children are five times safer facing the rear until they are two years old. Rear-facing child seats provide the best protection for the head, neck and spinal cord.

### Face the Front

Children should ride in front-facing child seats with harnesses until they reach the height or weight limits of the harnesses. All models can be used up to 40 pounds, but many newer harness designs can be used until children weigh 50, 65, or more pounds. Front-facing harnesses spread force over wide areas of small bodies.

### Booster Seat

Children should ride in booster seats used with lap and shoulder belts, until the seat belts alone fit correctly. Depending on the child and the specific vehicle, this usually occurs between ages 8 and 11. The lap belt should fit flat across a child's upper thighs (not across the soft abdomen) and the shoulder belt should cross snugly over the middle of a child's shoulder (not the neck). Booster seats help belts stay on strong body parts that don't injure as easily.

### Seat Belt

Seat belts fit if a child can sit all the way back with knees bent naturally over the seat edge. While sitting all the way back against the vehicle seat, the lap belt should fit flat across a child's upper thighs (not across the soft abdomen) and the shoulder belt should cross snugly over the middle of a child's shoulder (not the neck). This belt placement must stay consistent throughout the ride. Seat belts distribute force and keep people in protected space.

*Children under 13 should ride in a rear vehicle seat. A child in front is 40% more likely to be injured, whether there are air bags, advanced air bags or no air bags. NEVER place child in a rear-facing child seat near an active frontal air bag.*

## ILLUSTRATION: Critical Misuse of Child Restraints

