

## **Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Latino children.**

### **In Spanish: Aviso especial para los niños Latinos**

Since 1990, the Hispanic population in the United States has increased by nearly 60 percent. As this population continues to grow, the low safety belt use rate by Hispanics is emerging as a significant public health issue. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Hispanics from 1-34 years of age, and are the sixth leading cause of death for Hispanics of all ages.



As a result of the low belt usage rates, a greater proportion of future crash injuries and fatalities is projected to come from the Hispanic community. Hispanics currently make up 13 percent of the U.S. population and are projected to make up 24 percent by 2050.

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death and acquired disability for Latino children in the U.S. Studies show that Latino children die in crashes at rates up to 60 percent higher than non-Latino white children. Among Latino children, 4-8 year-olds are the most likely to be injured in a crash, according to the 2007 Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS) *Fact & Trend Report*. This heightened risk, say researchers, occurs because children in this age group are also the least likely to be restrained appropriately for their age and size.

According to the *Fact & Trend Report*, which analyzed 2006 PCPS data, about 71 percent of 5-year-olds were using either a car seat or booster seat; by age 6, that number was cut in half; and by age 8, only 11.5 percent were using a booster seat. The results are concerning as it is clear many Latino parents are moving their children directly to seat belts when the children outgrow their car seats rather than placing them in a booster seat.

Additional findings from the Fact and Trend Report show that more than 75 percent of crashes involving Latino children occurred within 20 minutes from home. About 70 percent of crashes occurred on roads with a speed limit of less than 45 m.p.h. and between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Most crashes occurred during the course of normal daily activities such as driving to school, church, sports practices, or to the store.

AAA hopes to encourage expanded efforts to increase safety belt use within the Hispanic community to reverse the current trend. AAA believes state and local efforts to increase seat belt use among Latino parents will produce higher seat belt and child seat usage for parents and children.

AAA, the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** and other groups are working to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers by offering educational literature in Spanish. In addition, NHTSA maintains a database of child safety seat inspection

locations around the country that can be easily accessed in English or Spanish by calling (toll-free) 1-866-SEAT-CHECK (1-866-732-8243) or by logging onto [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org).

For more information on this topic, contact your **local AAA club**.

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The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety's "Children in Traffic" video provides insight into why children behave unexpectedly and is a must-see for all drivers. **Order it online!** Also available **in Spanish!**