

Traffic Safety Facts

2008 Data

Children

In 2008, there were nearly 61 million children age 14 and younger in the United States. This age group made up 20 percent of the total U.S. resident population in 2008.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for ages 3 to 14 (based on 2006 figures, which are the latest mortality data currently available from the National Center for Health Statistics).

In 2008, there were a total of 37,261 traffic fatalities in the United States. The 14-and-younger age group accounted for 4 percent (1,347) of those traffic fatalities. This age group accounted for 3 percent (968) of all vehicle occupant fatalities, 8 percent (193,000) of all the people injured in motor vehicle crashes, and 8 percent (168,000) of all the vehicle occupants injured in crashes. During 2008, fatalities in this age group (1,347) decreased 20 percent from the 1,680 fatalities in 2007.

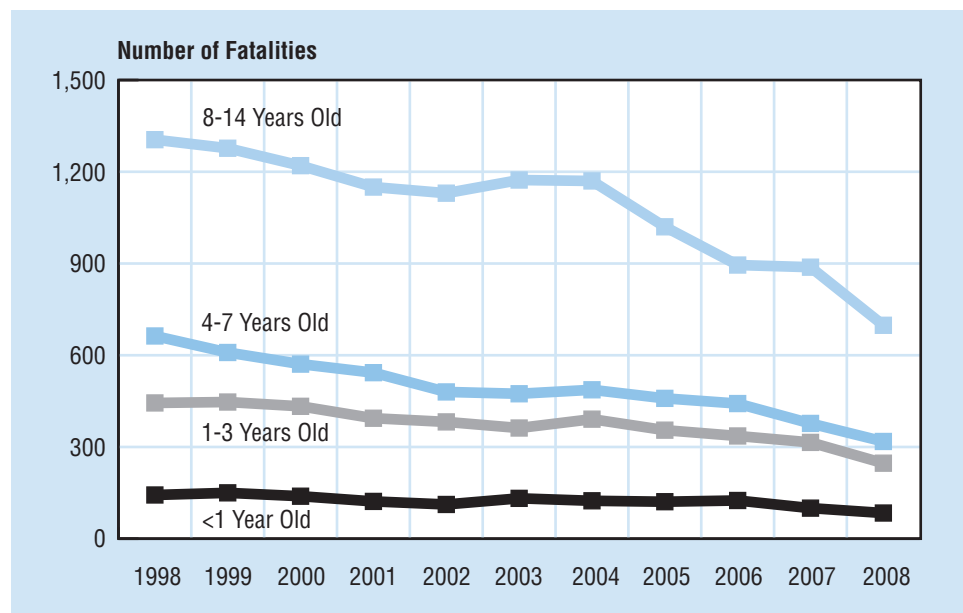
Every day in the United States, an average of 4 children age 14 and younger were killed and 529 were injured in motor vehicle crashes during 2008.

In the 14-and-younger age group, males accounted for 60 percent of the fatalities and 48 percent of those injured in motor vehicle crashes during 2008.

“Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children from 3 to 14 years old.”

Figure 1

Total Traffic Fatalities Among Children Age 14 and Younger by Age Group, 1998-2008



Alcohol-Impaired Driving Crashes and Children

In 2008, a total of 1,347 children age 14 and younger were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Of those 1,347 fatalities, 216 (16%) occurred in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. Out of those 216 deaths, about half (99) were occupants of a vehicle with a driver who had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of .08 or higher.

Another 34 children age 14 and younger who were killed in traffic crashes in 2008 were pedestrians or pedalcyclists who were struck by drivers with a BAC of .08 or higher.

Pedestrians

There were a total of 4,378 pedestrian fatalities in 2008, of which the 14-and-younger age group accounted for 270 (6%) of those fatalities. About one-fifth (20%) of the traffic fatalities in the 14-and-younger age group were pedestrians.

In 1998 there were 540 pedestrian fatalities in the 14-and-younger age group. From 1998 to 2008, the number of pedestrian fatalities in this age group decreased by 50 percent, with the 4 to 7-year-old age group showing the largest decrease (59%).

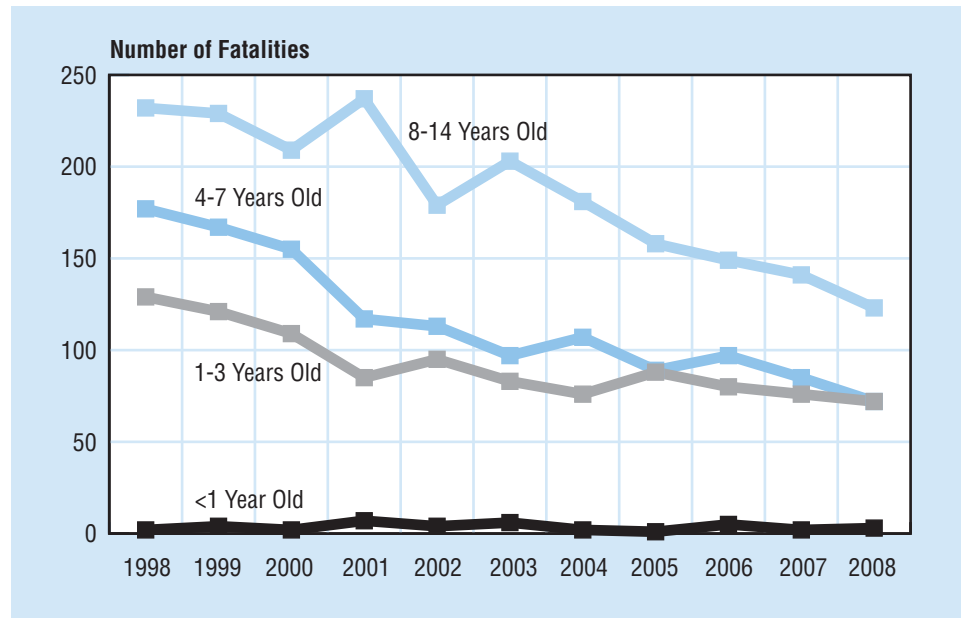
Of the total 270 pedestrian fatalities among children age 14 and younger in 2008, 173 (64%) of those killed were males.

In 2008, an estimated 69,000 pedestrians were injured, 13,000 of those injured were age 14 and younger, and males accounted for 52 percent (7,000) of those 13,000 injured.

"In 2008, 16 percent of the children age 14 and younger killed in crashes were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes."

Figure 2

Total Pedestrian Fatalities Among Children Age 14 and Younger by Age Group, 1998-2008



During 2008, the highest percentage of fatalities among young pedestrians occurred between 4:00 p.m. and 7:59 p.m. (43%). The second highest percentage of fatalities among young pedestrians were between the hours of 8 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. (21%), which is a 1-percent increase from 2007 during those same hours. Between the hours of noon and 3:59 p.m. the 14-and-younger age group accounted for 17 percent of the pedestrian fatalities as compared to 2007 which was higher during this same time at 22 percent.

Seventy six percent of the pedestrian fatalities among the 14-and-younger age group occurred at non-intersection locations, which is a slight decrease from 2007 (80%).

Pedalcyclists

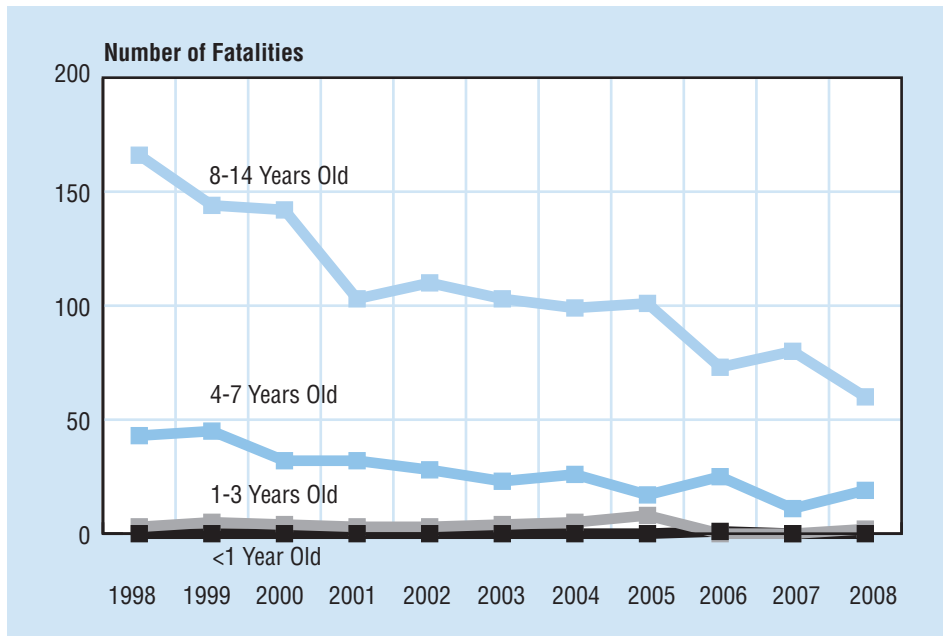
A total of 716 pedalcyclists were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2008. The 14-and-younger age group accounted for 11 percent (81) of those fatalities, and males accounted for 74 percent (60) of the fatalities among pedalcyclists age 14 and younger.

The 81 pedalcyclist fatalities in 2008 for the 14-and-younger age group represent a decrease of 62 percent from the 212 killed in 1998.

In 2008, an estimated 52,000 pedalcyclists were injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Twenty-one percent (or an estimated 11,000) of the pedalcyclists who were injured were age 14 or younger.

“In 2008, 21 percent of the pedalcyclists injured in motor vehicle crashes were 14 years old or younger.”

Figure 3
Total Pedalcyclist Fatalities Among Children Age 14 and Younger by Age Group, 1998-2008



Restraint Use and Their Effectiveness

Research has shown that lap/shoulder seat belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat occupants (age 5 and older) of passenger cars by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. For light-truck occupants, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 65 percent.

During 2008, 5,598 passenger vehicle occupants age 14 and younger were involved in fatal crashes. For those children where restraint use was known, 23 percent were unrestrained; among those who were fatally injured, 46 percent were unrestrained.

Table 1

Restraint Use by Passenger Vehicle Occupants Involved in Fatal Crashes by Age Group, 2008

Restraint Use (%)	Age Group (Years)						Total
	<1	1-3	4-7	8-14	15-20	All Other	
Restraint Used	87	86	78	70	58	66	66
Restraint Not Used	13	14	22	30	42	34	34

Note: Excluding unknown age and unknown restraint use.

“Child safety seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers in passenger cars.”

Research on the effectiveness of child safety seats has found them to reduce fatal injury by 71 percent for infants (younger than 1 year old) and by 54 percent for toddlers (1 to 4 years old) in passenger cars. For infants and toddlers in light trucks, the corresponding reductions are 58 percent and 59 percent, respectively.

In 2008, there were 297 passenger vehicle occupant fatalities among children age 4 and younger. Of those 297 fatalities, where restraint use was known (282), 94 (32%) were totally unrestrained.

Table 2

Children Age 4 and Younger Killed in Passenger Vehicles by Age Group and Type of Restraint, 2008

	Age Group (Years)		Total
	<1	1-4	
None Used	18	76	94
Adult Seat Belt	4	24	28
Child Seat	53	104	157
Restraint Used-Unknown	1	2	3
Unknown	1	14	15
Total	77	220	297

Among children under age 5 in passenger vehicles, an estimated 244 lives were saved in 2008 by restraint use. Of these 244 lives saved, 219 were associated with the use of child safety seats and 25 with the use of adult seat belts. At 100 percent child safety seat use for children under age 5, an estimated 323 lives (that is, an additional 79) could have been saved in 2008.

Over the period 1975 through 2008 an estimated 8,959 lives were saved by child restraints (child safety seats or adults seat belts).

NHTSA conducted the National Survey of the Use of Booster Seats (NSUBS) and produced a Research Note (DOT HS 811 148) in June 2009 titled "Child Restraint Use in 2008—Demographic Results." Table 3 provides data on the use of child restraints by age and race/ethnicity in 2008. Child restraints include child safety seats, seat belts, and booster seats.

Table 3
Child Restraint Use by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2008

	Age Birth–12 Months	Age 1–3 Years	Age 4–7 Years	Age 8–12 Years
Hispanic	96%	84%	82%	79%
African American Non-Hispanic	94%	74%	84%	72%
White Non-Hispanic	100%	99%	93%	90%
Asian Non-Hispanic	NA	99%	95%	91%
Other	NA	86%	76%	77%

NA: Data not sufficient to produce a reliable estimate

Source: National Survey of the Use of Booster Seats, NCSA/NHTSA, 2008 (DOT HS 811 148)

“Children in rear-facing child seats should not be placed in the front seats of vehicles with passenger air bags. The impact of a deploying air bag on a rear-facing child seat could injure the child.”

Important Safety Reminders

Failure to read the child safety seat instructions, in addition to vehicle owner manual instructions regarding seat belts, could result in serious injury or death as a result of a failure of the child safety seat to be securely and/or properly restrained.

Children in rear-facing child seats should not be placed in the front seat of vehicles equipped with passenger-side air bags. The impact of a deploying air bag striking a rear-facing child seat could result in injury to the child. NHTSA also recommends that children 12 and under sit in the rear seat away from the force of a deploying air bag.

Children age 12 and under are safest when properly buckled in the back seat of a motor vehicle.

Always read the child restraint manufacturer instructions and the vehicle owner manual instructions.

For more information:

Information on traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NVS-421, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA can be contacted on 800-934-8517. Fax messages should be sent to 202-366-7078. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at www.nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/nca. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236.

Other fact sheets available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis are *Overview, Alcohol, African American, Bicyclists and Other Cyclists, Hispanic, Large Trucks, Motorcycles, Occupant Protection, Older Population, Pedestrians, Race and Ethnicity, Rural/Urban Comparisons, School Transportation-Related Crashes, Speeding, State Alcohol Estimates, State Traffic Data, and Young Drivers*. Detailed data on motor vehicle traffic crashes are published annually in *Traffic Safety Facts: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System*. The fact sheets and annual Traffic Safety Facts report can be accessed online at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/CATS/index.aspx.

Table 4

Total Traffic Fatalities Among Children Age 14 and Under by State and Age Group, 2008

State	Age (Years)				Total
	<1	1-3	4-7	8-14	
Alabama	2	6	8	16	32
Alaska	0	0	1	2	3
Arizona	5	2	8	18	33
Arkansas	2	3	6	12	23
California	8	23	35	76	142
Colorado	2	4	7	15	28
Connecticut	0	1	0	4	5
Delaware	0	3	3	0	6
Dist of Columbia	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	2	18	17	36	73
Georgia	8	10	14	33	65
Hawaii	0	1	0	1	2
Idaho	2	0	4	4	10
Illinois	6	5	12	21	44
Indiana	1	4	11	18	34
Iowa	1	1	1	11	14
Kansas	0	2	4	6	12
Kentucky	2	5	5	11	23
Louisiana	0	7	15	19	41
Maine	0	0	1	1	2
Maryland	0	6	5	8	19
Massachusetts	1	1	0	4	6
Michigan	1	7	8	23	39
Minnesota	3	6	5	12	26
Mississippi	0	6	11	15	32
Missouri	3	6	8	18	35
Montana	1	0	3	7	11
Nebraska	0	0	4	3	7
Nevada	0	1	3	9	13
New Hampshire	0	0	1	1	2
New Jersey	2	3	3	11	19
New Mexico	2	3	1	7	13
New York	1	3	12	25	41
North Carolina	5	8	7	25	45
North Dakota	1	0	0	3	4
Ohio	3	9	9	27	48
Oklahoma	0	6	1	20	27
Oregon	1	3	6	5	15
Pennsylvania	0	7	8	14	29
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	0	7	4	18	29
South Dakota	1	1	2	1	5
Tennessee	3	8	8	16	35
Texas	8	43	36	67	154
Utah	0	2	7	18	27
Vermont	0	0	0	1	1
Virginia	2	5	6	11	24
Washington	2	4	1	6	13
West Virginia	0	3	1	5	9
Wisconsin	3	4	6	9	22
Wyoming	0	0	0	5	5
National	84	247	318	698	1,347
Puerto Rico	4	3	1	6	14