



# Children

During 2012, there were a total of 33,561 traffic fatalities in the United States. Children 14 and younger accounted for 1,168 (3%) of those traffic fatalities, which is a 3-percent increase from the 1,139 fatalities in 2011. In 2012, there were 169,000 children 14 and younger injured, which is a 1-percent decrease from 171,000 children injured in 2011.

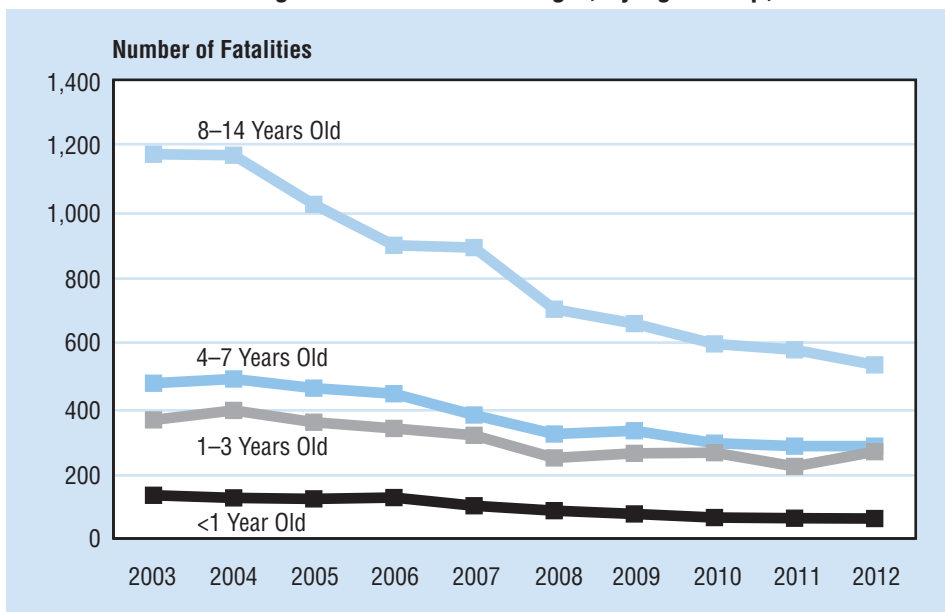
In 2012, there were 61 million children 14 and younger in the United States, 19 percent of the total U.S. resident population.

Motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for children age 4 and every age 11 through 14 (based on 2009 figures, which is the latest mortality data available from the National Center for Health Statistics).

An average of 3 children 14 and younger were killed and 462 were injured every day in the United States in motor vehicle crashes during 2012. From 2003 to 2012, the number of fatalities in the 14-and-younger age group decreased by 45 percent, with the 8- to 14-year-old age group showing the largest decrease (53%) (see Figure 1). In the 14-and-younger age group, males accounted for 56 percent of the fatalities and 51 percent of those injured in motor vehicle crashes during 2012.

*Motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for children age 4 and every age 11 through 14.*

Figure 1  
**Traffic Fatalities Among Children 14 and Younger, by Age Group, 2003–2012**



## Restraint Use and Its Effectiveness

Research has shown that lap/shoulder seat belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat occupants 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 2012, there were 4,888 passenger vehicle occupants 14 and younger involved in fatal crashes. For these children for whom restraint use was known, 18 percent were unrestrained (Table 1); among these who were fatally injured, 40 percent were unrestrained.

Table 1

### Percent of Passenger Vehicle Occupants Involved in Fatal Crashes, by Restraint Use and Age Group, 2012

Restraint Use (%)	Age Group (Years)							Total
	<1	1–3	4–7	8–14	<15	15–20	>20	
Restraint Used	91	88	82	78	82	63	70	70
Restraint Not Used	9	12	18	22	18	37	30	30

Note: Excluding unknown age and unknown restraint use.

*In passenger cars, child safety seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers.*

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 2012, there were 298 passenger vehicle occupant fatalities among children 4 and younger. Of those 298 fatalities, where restraint use was known (283), 88 (31%) were totally unrestrained (Table 2).

Table 2

### Children 4 and Younger Killed in Passenger Vehicles, by Type of Restraint and Age Group, 2012

Type of Restraint	Age Group (Years)		Total
	<1	1–4	
None Used	15	73	88
Adult Seat Belt	2	19	21
Child Seat	34	137	171
Restraint Used—Unknown	0	3	3
Unknown	2	13	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>298</b>

Among children younger than 5 in passenger vehicles involved in crashes, an estimated 284 lives were saved in 2012 by restraint use. Of these 284 lives saved, 265 were associated with the use of child safety seats and 18 with the use of adult seat belts. At 100-percent child safety seat use for children under 5, an estimated 342 lives (that is, an additional 58) could have been saved in 2012.

Over the period 1975 through 2012 an estimated 10,157 lives were saved by child restraints (child safety seats or adult seat belts) for children 4 and younger in passenger vehicles.

NHTSA conducted the National Survey of the Use of Booster Seats (NSUBS) and produced a report (DOT HS 811 718) in April 2013 titled “The 2011 National Survey of the Use of Booster Seats.” Table 3 provides data on the use of child restraints by age and race/ethnicity in 2011. Child restraints include child safety seats, seat belts, and booster seats.

Table 3  
**Child Restraint Use, by Age and Race/Ethnicity in 2011**

Race/Ethnicity (Percent)	Age Group (Years)			
	<1 Year	1–3 Years	4–7 Years	8–12 Years
Hispanic	95	90	79	83
African American Non-Hispanic	92	90	84	76
White Non-Hispanic	99	99	96	91
Asian Non-Hispanic	NA	100	99	96
Other	NA	95	88	91

NA: Data not sufficient to produce a reliable estimate

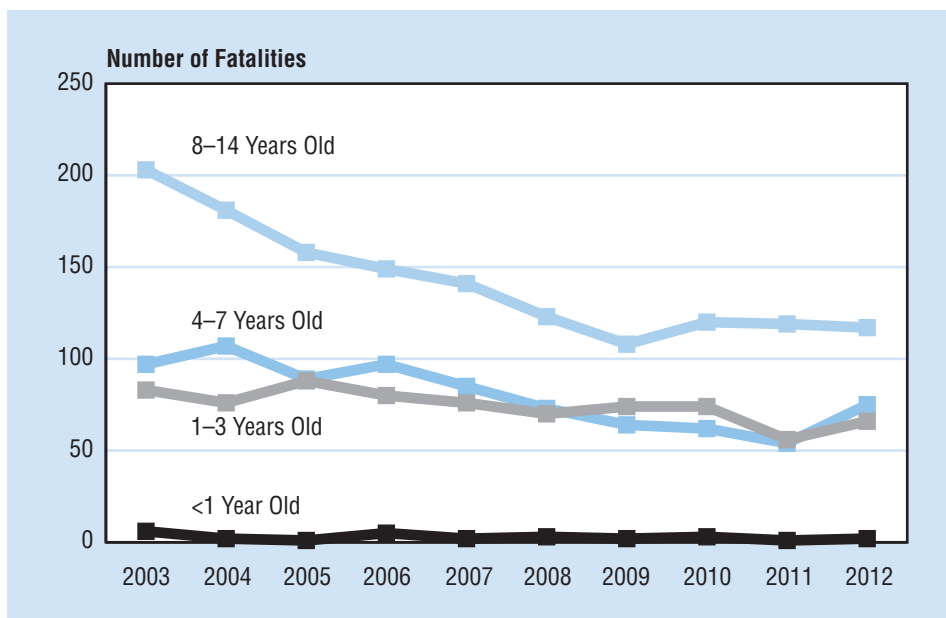
Source: The 2011 National Survey of the Use of Booster Seats, NCSA/NHTSA (DOT HS 811 718)

## Pedestrians

There were a total of 4,743 pedestrian fatalities in 2012; the 14-and-younger age group accounted for 255 (5%) of those fatalities. More than one-fifth (22%) of the traffic fatalities in the 14-and-younger age group were pedestrians.

In 2003, there were 389 pedestrian fatalities in the 14-and-younger age group. From 2003 to 2012, the number of pedestrian fatalities in this age group decreased by 34 percent, with the 8- to 14-year-old age group showing the largest percentage decrease (43%) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2  
**Pedestrian Fatalities Among Children 14 and Younger, by Age Group, 2003–2012**



## Important Safety Reminders

- Failure to read the child safety seat instructions, in addition to vehicle owner’s manual instructions regarding seat belts, could result in death or serious injury as a result of a failure of the child safety seat to be properly secured and/or properly restrained.
- Children in rear-facing child seats should not be placed in the front seats 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 younger sit in the rear seat away from the force of a deploying air bag.
- Children 12 and younger are safest when properly buckled in the back seats of motor vehicles.
- Always read the child restraint manufacturer instructions and the vehicle owner manual instructions.

Of the 255 pedestrian fatalities in 2012 among children 14 and younger, 148 (58%) of those killed were males.

In 2012, an estimated 76,000 pedestrians were injured, 11,000 of those injured were 14 and younger, and males accounted for 58 percent (7,000) of those 11,000 injured.

During 2012, the highest percentage of fatalities among pedestrians 14 and younger occurred between 4 p.m. and 7:59 p.m. (42%). The second highest percentage of fatalities among young pedestrians were between 8 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. (22%). Between noon and 3:59 p.m. the 14-and-younger age group accounted for 17 percent of the pedestrian fatalities.

Seventy-six percent of the pedestrian fatalities among the 14-and-younger age group occurred at non-intersection locations, a decrease from 77 percent in 2011.

*In 2012, 18 percent of the pedalcyclists injured in motor vehicle crashes were 14 and younger.*

## Pedalcyclists

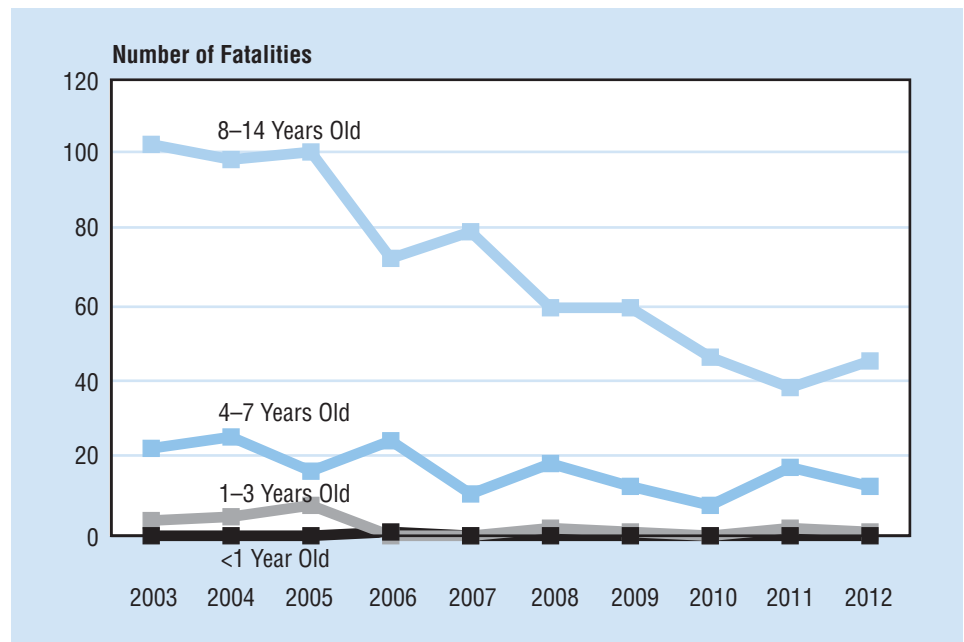
Pedalcyclists are riders of bicycles (two-wheel, non-motorized cycles) and other cycles (tricycles and unicycles) powered solely by pedals.

A total of 726 pedalcyclists were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2012. The 14-and-younger age group accounted for 8 percent (58) of those fatalities, and males accounted for 81 percent (47) of the fatalities among pedalcyclists 14 and younger.

The 58 pedalcyclist fatalities in 2012 for the 14-and-younger age group represent a decrease of 55 percent from the 130 killed in 2003, with the 8- to 14-year-old age group showing the largest decrease (55%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

### Pedalcyclist Fatalities Among Children 14 and Younger, by Age Group, 2003–2012



In 2012, an estimated 49,000 pedalcyclists were injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Eighteen percent (or an estimated 9,000) of the pedalcyclists who were injured were 14 and younger.

## Alcohol-Impaired-Driving Crashes and Children

In 2012, of the 1,168 children 14 and younger killed in motor vehicle crashes, 239 (20%) were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Out of those 239 deaths, 52 percent (124) were passengers of vehicles with drivers who had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher.

Thirty-eight children 14 and younger who were killed in traffic crashes in 2012 were pedestrians or pedalcyclists who were struck by drivers with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher.

## Fatalities Among Children by State

Table 4 shows traffic fatalities among children 14 and younger by State and age group in 2012. Among children 14 and younger who died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2012, about half (549) were 8 to 14 years old, highest among all age groups. The second highest age group was the 4- to 7-year-old age group (291), followed by toddlers (268) and infants (60). Among all States, child fatalities in the 14-and-younger age group ranged from 181 (highest) to 1 (lowest) depending on the size and population of the State.

*In 2012, 20 percent of the children 14 and younger killed in crashes were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes.*

### For more information:

- Information on traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA), NVS-424, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590. NCSA can be contacted on 800-934-8517 or via the following email address: [ncsaweb@dot.gov](mailto:ncsaweb@dot.gov). General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at [www.nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/ncsa](http://www.nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/ncsa). 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 *Alcohol-Impaired Driving*, *Bicyclists and Other Cyclists*, *Large Trucks*, *Motorcycles*, *Occupant Protection*, *Older Population*, *Overview*, *Passenger Vehicles*, *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](http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/CATS/index.aspx).



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

Table 4  
**Fatalities Among Children 14 and Younger, by State and Age Group, 2012**

State	Age Group (Years)				Total
	<1	1-3	4-7	8-14	
Alabama	4	7	9	10	30
Alaska	0	0	0	3	3
Arizona	2	7	7	27	43
Arkansas	0	6	6	14	26
California	3	22	28	42	95
Colorado	0	3	0	13	16
Connecticut	0	0	1	3	4
Delaware	0	1	0	1	2
District of Columbia	0	0	0	1	1
Florida	1	10	9	38	58
Georgia	4	9	20	13	46
Hawaii	1	1	0	2	4
Idaho	0	1	3	3	7
Illinois	2	5	14	16	37
Indiana	1	10	7	11	29
Iowa	2	1	3	6	12
Kansas	1	6	3	13	23
Kentucky	2	5	11	8	26
Louisiana	1	6	9	19	35
Maine	0	0	1	2	3
Maryland	0	3	4	6	13
Massachusetts	0	3	1	3	7
Michigan	3	7	8	13	31
Minnesota	1	0	3	10	14
Mississippi	0	11	7	12	30
Missouri	2	10	4	7	23
Montana	0	1	1	5	7
Nebraska	1	4	3	7	15
Nevada	0	1	4	4	9
New Hampshire	0	0	1	1	2
New Jersey	1	1	6	7	15
New Mexico	1	3	4	3	11
New York	2	7	8	26	43
North Carolina	3	18	8	25	54
North Dakota	0	1	1	2	4
Ohio	2	9	7	10	28
Oklahoma	0	2	3	5	10
Oregon	0	2	2	4	8
Pennsylvania	2	7	9	14	32
Rhode Island	0	1	0	1	2
South Carolina	0	3	10	6	19
South Dakota	2	2	1	4	9
Tennessee	2	6	7	8	23
Texas	6	48	42	85	181
Utah	0	5	3	5	13
Vermont	1	0	0	1	2
Virginia	4	3	4	7	18
Washington	1	3	2	7	13
West Virginia	0	3	2	8	13
Wisconsin	1	2	4	7	14
Wyoming	1	2	1	1	5
<b>National</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>1,168</b>
Puerto Rico	0	2	2	4	8