



For: AUTO21

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**INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT STUDY
SHOWS ALARMINGLY LOW BOOSTER SEAT USE ACROSS CANADA**

An estimated 1.8 million children are unknowingly at risk of serious injury

WINDSOR, Ont., June 4, 2007 — According to new research completed by the national automotive research network AUTO21 for Transport Canada, only 28 percent of children between the ages of 4 and 8 nationwide are properly secured in booster or child seats when traveling in a vehicle. Too large for baby seats and too small for seat belts only, this age group experiences about 10 times more deaths and injuries during car crashes than babies and toddlers. Throughout Canada — even in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia, where laws requiring booster seat use are in effect — 72 percent of children ages 4 to 8 are restrained in seat belts only, which places an estimated 1.8 million children at risk of serious injury in the event of a crash.

In-Vehicle Restraint Usage Among 4-8 Year-Old Children

Province	Booster/Child Seat	Seat Belt Only
Canada	28.0%	72.0%
Newfoundland	5.3%	94.7%
Prince Edward Island	17.4%	82.6%
Nova Scotia	22.8%	77.2%
New Brunswick	26.4%	73.6%
Quebec	30.9%	69.1%
Ontario	34.3%	65.7%
Manitoba	17.7%	82.3%
Saskatchewan	25.2%	74.8%
Alberta	29.3%	70.7%
British Columbia	26.7%	73.3%
NW Territories	31.6%	68.4%

The prevailing use of seat belts for children in vehicles suggests parents want to do what's right to protect their children, but need a better understanding of the risks presented by seat belts when they are not used with a booster seat. The reason for the danger is the poor fit of safety belt systems for children, which are designed to protect adults.

“It is critical to the welfare of our children that we get the word out on not only using booster seats, but also the dangers of not using them,” said Anne Snowdon, Ph.D., University of Windsor professor and AUTO21 Health, Safety and Injury Prevention theme coordinator. “Kids are dying and being injured at an alarming rate — about 100 children in Canada under the age of 10 die in vehicle collisions every year — and in 80 percent of cases it’s seat belts causing harm because children from ages 4 to 8 don’t fit in them properly without a belt-positioning booster seat.”

The new research by AUTO21 — the most detailed and comprehensive study on children’s restraint use ever conducted in Canada and the first in 10 years — is based on observing more than 13,500 children across Canada. In addition to determining the number of school-aged children in boosters, the study examined in-vehicle restraint practices across a broad range of ages, heights and weights, from infants to 14 year-olds. Dr. Snowdon will present the study findings at the Canadian Multidisciplinary Road Safety Conference in Montreal this week. A copy of the scientific, peer reviewed manuscript is available for download at www.auto21.ca.

Kid approval reduces resistance to booster use

“The total solution requires a combination of legislation, parent knowledge and seats that kids want to sit in,” said Snowdon. “We believe we can attack the lack of booster seat usage through new seating products that parents and kids are more inclined to use.”

In line with this three-pronged strategy, AUTO21 researchers teamed with Magna Aftermarket to develop the unique clek™ booster seat. Clek was designed for convenience and safety, and with the goal of reducing child opposition to booster seats through a more comfortable, stylish option.

“Clek looks and feels like a real seat, offering improved comfort and ergonomic advantages that reduce pressure on the sciatic nerve and keep a child’s legs and feet from going numb on longer car rides,” added Snowdon. It’s also the only backless booster seat on the market that locks directly to a vehicle’s LATCH system, providing a secure connection for improved stability. And by offering accessories and personalization, children are included in the selection-making process, which helps overcome the stigma of “sitting in a baby seat.”

The clek seat conforms to all applicable requirements of Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and bears the National Safety Mark. For more information visit www.magnaclek.com.

AUTO21 currently supports more than 260 researchers and 500 student researchers working on 41 auto-related research and development projects at 42 Canadian universities and institutions. The projects are supported by more than \$12 million per year in combined public and private sector funding. Research is conducted in the areas of health, safety, and injury prevention; societal issues; materials and manufacturing; design processes; powertrains, fuels and emissions; and intelligent systems and sensors. AUTO21 is funded through the Networks of Centres of Excellence of Canada program. For more information, visit www.auto21.ca.

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NOTES TO MEDIA:

- High-resolution photography of the clek booster seat is available for download at <http://clek.quell.com>.
- Spokespersons are available for interview from AUTO21 and Magna Aftermarket.
- High-quality video is available for broadcast media upon request.