



Child car safety restraints - Research report

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Child Car Safety Restraints

Executive Summary Report

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Prepared for:

Department for Transport

Prepared by:

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Part of BMRB International Limited

Introduction

BMRB was commissioned by the Department for Transport to conduct research amongst parents or guardians of children aged 11 years or under about their use of child car safety restraints.

A nationally representative sample of 3,018 adults aged 16+ were screened which resulted in a total of 719 interviews which were carried out with the target audience of parents or guardians of children aged 11 or under in Great Britain. The fieldwork was carried out between 7th and 9th November and 14th and 16th November 2003. Interviews were conducted via the telephone using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The sample was selected through random digit dialling.

The total sample of respondents interviewed is representative of the population of Great Britain in terms of age, sex, social grade and region.

Aims and objectives

The aims of the research were to:

- To find out whether the usage of child restraints decreases as the children get older.

To find out whether parents are aware that their children may need a car seat/ booster seat up to the age of 11.

- To find out if second hand car seats are being used in a safe manner.

Frequency of travel in a purpose made child car restraint

Parents or guardians of children aged 11 or under were asked if their child or children travel by car, over eight in ten (83%) said that they did. These respondents were then asked the age of their child. If the respondent said that they had more than one child, they were asked to concentrate on the child who had had the most recent birthday in the household.

The following chart illustrates the age bands of the children who travel by car:

Chart 1: Age of children travelling by car

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The respondents with children who travel by car were then asked "How often do they travel in a purpose made child car restraint.". Almost two thirds (62%) said either "Always" or "Most times" and 38% said "Sometimes" or "Never".

Over a third (35%) of respondents say that their children never travel in a purpose made restraint when in a car. There are no significant differences between the regions. In London and the South East, 39% of children never travel in a purpose made child restraint and this drops to 30% when the North, North West

and Scotland regions are combined together. The chart below shows the frequency of how often children travel in a child car restraint when travelling by car.

Chart 2: How often children travel in a child car restraint

Chart 2: How often children travel in a child car restraint

When we look at how old the children in question are, it is clear to see that as the children get older, the number of them who "always" travel in a purpose made restraint drops off significantly. 94% of respondents with a child aged between 0-3 years say their child always travels in a purpose made restraint but this drops to 66% for children aged 4-6, 41% for children aged 7-9 and 26% for those children aged 10-11 years.

Age at which it is considered safe for children to start using adult seatbelts

When respondents who had children aged between 7 and 11 years old were asked at what age they thought it was safe to start using adult seatbelts, almost half (47%), gave the answer of between the ages of 7 and 9 years. Just over a fifth (21%), said they thought that it was safe for children to start using adult seatbelts between the ages of 4 and 6 years.

Chart 3: Age considered safe for children to start using adult seatbelts

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Height at which it is considered safe to start using adult seatbelts

The same respondents were then asked at which height they considered it safe for children to start using adult seatbelts, 64% said "under 150 centimetres or 5 feet" in height, just over a quarter (27%) said "over 150 centimetres" and 9% didn't know.

The age that respondent's child stopped using child car seats

Respondents who had said that their children never travel in a child car restraint were then asked at what age their child had stopped using child car seats.

Over half of these respondents (53%) said that their child had stopped using car seats between the ages of 4 and 6 years. Just under a third (30%), gave the response of between 7 and 9 years. Worryingly, one in ten respondents said that their child was aged between 0 and 3 when they stopped using child car seats.

This figure was more than twice as high among male respondents compared to females (15% and 6% respectively).

Chart 4: Age of child when stopped using child car seats

Chart 4: Age of child when stopped using child car seats

Second hand child car restraints

Respondents were asked whether they had either bought or been given a second hand child car restraint. 9% of respondents said that they had bought one and 12% said that they had been give one. 3% of respondents had both bought and been given a second hand child seat.

From this, it can be seen that just over 1 in 5 respondents (21%) said that they own a second hand child seat which they had either bought or been given in the past.

Those saying that they have bought a second hand child seat, is higher among the lower social grades, with 13% of the D and E social grades saying this is the case, compared to 8% of the AB's and also the C1's

Of those who have bought or been given a second hand child car seat, 82% of them say that it is 7 or fewer years old. 14% of the respondents with a second hand child seat do not know the age of their seat.

Respondents who have a second hand child car seat were then asked whether they knew if it had been involved in any accidents in the past. Almost two thirds 63% said no, they don't know whether it had been involved in any accidents. A further 10% answered "Don't know".

28% of respondents said that they did know about the history of their second hand child car restraint.

When asked about whether they were supplied with fitting instructions for their second hand child seat, 58% said that they were and 35% said no, they were not.

Appendix A - Copy of final questionnaire

Appendix A is available as a Word download from the right of the page

Appendix B - BMRB International Quality Standards

BMRB International has held the ISO 9001 (Quality Systems) accreditation since 1994. Following a successful British Standards Institute assessment for BS7911 (the Quality specification for Organisations providing Market Research), BMRB achieved MRQSA registration in September 1999. All surveys are conducted in accordance with the requirements of these standards. Our quality policy, manual, procedures and list of approved suppliers are available for inspection.

Detailed working guidelines are available for all our Researchers, Field staff, Data Capture and Data Processing Executives. These documents explain in detail the processes involved and checks that are conducted on all our work.

BMRB's quality standards (unless otherwise specified) are as follows:

All surveys conducted in the UK:

Project Management:

Our questionnaires are comprehensively tested by our research, field and data processing departments before going into Field.

Where appropriate, sample is checked before fieldwork commences.

Telephone Interviewing

- All interviewing is conducted in line with or exceeds the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme standards as documented in BS7911.
- All new interviewers receive an initial two and a half days' training.
- Supervisors receive an additional two days' training.
- New interviewers are monitored for at least 1 in 4 shifts.
- Minimum of 5% of all interviews are monitored.
- Supervisors are present during all interviewing shifts.
- An interviewer performance review is held each month.
- All interviewers are personally briefed on each project

All surveys conducted in the UK or overseas:

Data Processing

Test tables are produced to check specification.

Stringent quality checks, as detailed in BS7911, are made on both tables and electronic output by data processing executive and researcher.

Presentations

The content and format of presentations are reviewed by a senior researcher before being finalised. All presentations of survey results are rehearsed in front of a senior BMRB researcher before they are presented to the client.

Reporting

All reports are reviewed by a senior BMRB researcher before they are produced.

Appendix C - Standard Access Classification Questions

Appendix C is available as a Word download from the right of the page