

Today's parents expect their children to buckle up **every time** they get into a moving vehicle.

Yet while we buckle up our children without thinking twice, every school day we put those **same children**, over 23 million of them, on school buses **without restraints**.

Some of the most progressive school districts in the U.S. have moved forward with lap-shoulder belts on newly purchased school buses due to concerns about student safety.

You can directly impact the well-being of children in your district and your state by advocating for lap-shoulder belts on school buses.



# Why Seat Belts on School Buses?

## Crash Protection

NHTSA\* has determined lap-shoulder belts are the optimum form of crash protection for children on school buses, providing greater protection than lap belts or compartmentalization (closely spaced, high-back padded seats). For anything more than a low speed crash, compartmentalization offers limited protection and virtually no protection in a rollover crash.

Research by NHTSA indicates that lap-shoulder belts, in every vehicle in which they have ever been introduced, reduce injuries and fatalities by 45 percent in all types of crashes – and up to 70 percent in rollover crashes.

\* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

## Building a Lifelong Habit

For most children, their first ride on the school bus is the first time they ever ride unrestrained in a motor vehicle. In other words, the only place a child is taught to *not* wear a seat belt is in school transportation. To allow school bus passengers to remain unrestrained gives a contradictory message to our children – that seat belts can be unnecessary inside a moving vehicle.

In 2006 alone, about 3,000 U.S. teens died in auto accidents while riding unbelted. Since we know that lap-shoulder belts reduce injuries and fatalities by at least 45 percent, it follows that about half of those teens may be alive today had they buckled up while driving. This is the entire high school population of many school districts.

## Increasing School Bus Ridership

Parents have a strong preference for keeping their children restrained in lap-shoulder belts in all moving vehicles. Some actually opt out of sending their children on the school bus and instead transport them using their personal vehicles. This is a detriment to the environment, increases traffic in the community and could actually increase the risks to children as they travel to and from school.

According to the American School Bus Council (ASBC) parent poll in December 2006, the single biggest school bus safety concern is the lack of seat belts, with four out of five saying all school buses should be equipped with lap-shoulder belts.

## Seat Belts and Behavior

Drivers who have experienced the addition of lap-shoulder belts to their school buses agree – there is no greater deterrent to unruly behavior than keeping children in their seats.

The 2006 ASBC poll revealed the second safety concern for parents relates to discipline problems on the bus – an issue proven to be strongly impacted by the addition of seat belts.



# You Can Make a Difference!

To learn more about the issue of lap-shoulder belts on school buses and download helpful communication tools, visit **[safeguard4kids.com](http://safeguard4kids.com)** and **[safebuses4kids.com](http://safebuses4kids.com)**.

**SafeGuard**, based in Westfield, Indiana, has been the leader in child passenger protection for more than 25 years and is the largest child seating safety components manufacturer in the world. SafeGuard has been involved with school bus seating since 1971 and was the first company to bring lap-shoulder belts to market on school bus seats in 2002. With its own modern crash-

test facility, in-house certified passenger safety technicians and engineers who are experts in their field, SafeGuard is working to achieve one goal – to provide the most advanced protection for your child.

*SafeGuard is a division of IMMI.*



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