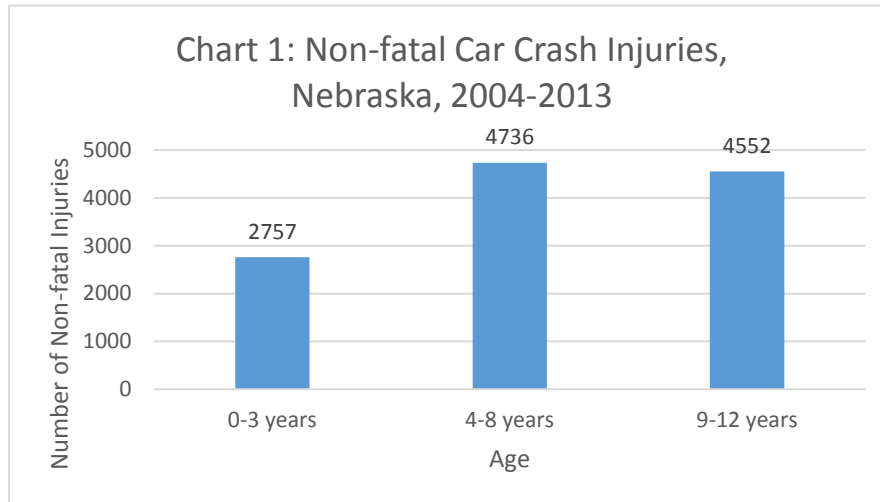


Protecting Older Children in Motor Vehicles

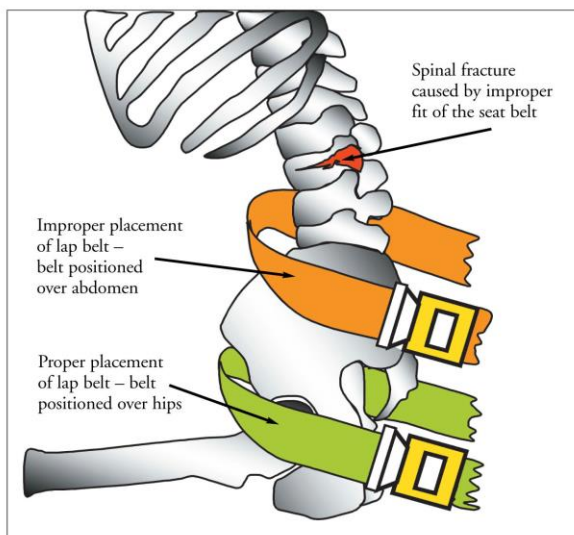
According to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, as children age, the overall risk of injury in a crash rises. This is due, in part, to the different ways they are restrained at each age (including improper seat belt fit); where they sit in the vehicle (back vs front); and other crash characteristics. In Nebraska, the risk of injury increases for older children (Chart 1).



Data Source: NE CODES

Improper Seat Belt Fit Increases Injuries

When children are moved into a seat belt before it fits properly, the lap belt can ride up on to the abdomen. During a crash, the soft tissue of the abdomen allows the lap belt to compress into the body causing internal abdominal and spinal fracture injuries (picture below). The shoulder belt, if positioned improperly behind the back or on the neck, can cause head and neck injuries.



Picture from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

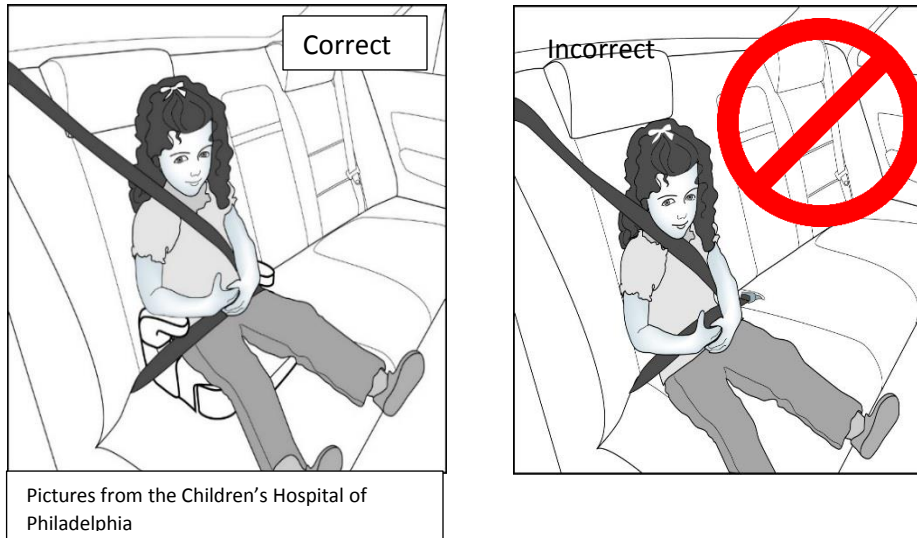
According to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, among children 4-8 years of age, those who were in a seat belt at the time of a crash were **more than three times as likely** to sustain an abdominal injury compared with children in a belt-positioning booster.

Steps to Protecting Older Children in Motor Vehicles

1. Use of belt positioning booster seats for proper seat belt fit

- Belt positioning booster seats properly position the lap and shoulder belt over the bony structure of the child's body.
- A proper fitting shoulder belt lies snugly across the shoulder and chest, not across the neck or face.
- A proper fitting lap belt lies snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach.
- Children usually transition from a booster seat to a seat belt between the ages of 8 and 12 years old.
- Children under 13 years of age should ride in the back seat, where it is safer.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



2. Increasing the age requirement for car seat/booster seat use

-In a study published in 2012 titled "Effects of booster seat laws on injury risk among children in crashes," Eichelberger, AH et al, studied five states that increased the age requirements for car seat/booster seat use to ages 7 or 8. They found that the rate of children using car seats and booster seats **increased nearly three times**, and the rate of children who sustained fatal or incapacitation injuries **decreased by 17%**. (CDC website)

-In a survey by Partners for Child Passenger Safety (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia), participants said they depend mostly upon state laws and local law enforcement for reliable information about how best to protect their children when transporting them.

3. Car seat education

- In Nebraska, child safety seat use has increased from 56% in 1999 to 97% in 2015 for children ages 0 to age 6. This increase is due, in part, to statewide car seat checks that provide education and seat distribution and child passenger safety trainings. (Nebraska Office of Highway Safety, Use of Child Safety Seats Survey Reports)

4. Enhanced enforcement

-Community-wide information and enhanced enforcement that focuses on the use and correct use of car seats and booster seats.