

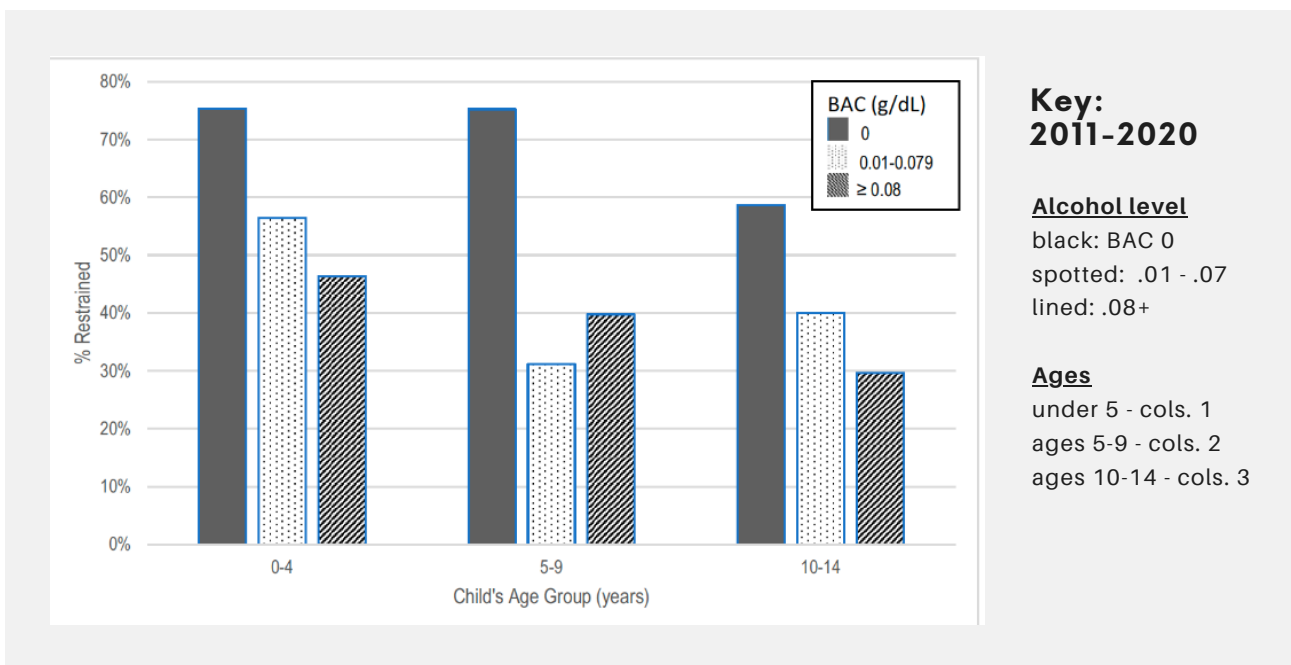
# UNDER THE RADAR: CHILD PASSENGERS AND IMPAIRED DRIVERS

Impaired drivers are less likely to buckle up children, putting them at increased risk.



## A FEW FACTS

- 22% of child passengers killed are caught up in crashes that involve impaired drivers.
- Of these children, most are **riding with the impaired driver** (between 51% and 69% depending on the data source and year).
- Of those for whom restraint data were available, 48% were unrestrained.
- Effective strategies are urgently needed to protect children at risk.



- Of 7,944 children under 15 killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2011-2020, 22% were in crashes with impaired drivers. Of those, 64% were riding with the impaired driver.
- Impaired drivers are less likely to buckle up children, especially as child age & BAC rise.<sup>1</sup>

#1 (2/16/24) PG 1 OF 2



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## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT DUI AND CHILDREN?

- Issue put on the map originally by Kyran Quinlan, MD, with the 2000 paper based on research done while a U.S. Centers for Disease Control Fellow; co-authors include David Sleet, PhD, well-known for automotive area research.
- Quinlan revisited the issue in 2014<sup>1</sup> analyzing FARS\* data for 2001-2010 with a child death where at least 1 driver had .08 or higher blood alcohol level. Ten years later, he and colleagues published in *Pediatrics*, 2/24<sup>1</sup>, data for 2011-2020, based on 7,944 child passenger deaths overall.

## FINDINGS 2011-2020:

- 1,124 of 1,755 children under 15 who died in alcohol-related crashes, or 64%, rode with the impaired driver.
- In cars in which children died, 69% of drivers LIVED, indicating the crashes were survivable.
- Crashes are most likely to be in the evening or at night and single vehicle.
- Driver profile: male, alcohol conviction within 3 years, no valid driver's license, BUT 44% of drivers were women. (See photo: Jan. 18, 8 p.m., female driver, female adult passenger, children ages 1, 2, & 7, deputy nearby, San Bernardino.)

## STATE-SPECIFIC DATA ON OVERALL CHILD AUTOMOTIVE FATALITIES: 2021

- California: 99 fatalities with two-thirds in ages 4-12; ranked 37th jurisdiction rated per 100,000 children.
- New Mexico. Mississippi, Alabama: highest rates per 100,000 children. Texas: most fatalities: 143.

*Earlier research on alcohol-involved crashes showed 61% of children were unrestrained.*

*Driver profile showed restraint use lacking and a median blood alcohol level: .15 (.08 is per se impaired (.05 in Utah).)*

## SAFETYBELTSAFE U.S.A. RECOMMENDS:

- Joint action to develop public awareness campaign to inform all adults of our responsibility to intervene when an inebriated adult plans to put children into a vehicle. **KIDS CAN'T GET OUT ON THEIR OWN. BE COURAGEOUS and intervene.**
- Campaign to alert professionals and community advocates about this risk and to develop a basic plan to keep kids out of the car for use in work with those found to have alcohol- and/or drug-impaired driving issues, with specific remedies for separated or divorced parents to safeguard children on visitation. **The message: ZERO alcohol, ZERO drugs, ZERO distractions for drivers.**
- A California law offers arrestee the option of installing Ignition Interlock Device (IID) from time of arrest instead of license suspension to allow for "driving to work" and "taking children to and from school". Could this be strongly encouraged to address problem of kids at risk? Data show IID program works better than suspension in other states and in 4-California-county pilot program.

<sup>1</sup>Quinlan, K, RA Schults, & RA Rudd, "Child Passenger Deaths Involving Alcohol-Impaired Drivers," *Pediatrics*, 5/5/14, 133; 966 & Quinlan, K, E Romano, T Kelley-Baker, "Child Passenger Deaths in Traffic Crashes Involving Alcohol-Impaired Drivers: 2011-2020", *Pediatrics*. 2/6/24

\*Fatality Analysis Reporting System



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