

Title: *Factors Influencing Parents' Correct and Consistent use of Booster Seats*

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Background: School-aged children in Canada are ten times more likely than any other age group to experience death or severe injury in road crashes. Lack of proper occupant restraints, including booster seats, is primarily responsible for these high rates of automobile death and injury. National surveys of booster seat use have noted regional differences; however, research on factors influencing usage is limited. This study examined influences on parents' decision making for booster seat use in two Canadian provinces.

Methods: Influences on parents' decision making for booster seat use were compared in British Columbia, a province with booster seat legislation in place; and Manitoba, a province that lacks booster seat legislation. This project involved the use of a consumer preference modeling survey, in which parents responded to a series of choices regarding booster seat use by their child. Participants were asked to select the option in which they would be most likely to use a booster seat, and were also asked about how often they use a booster seat, perceived barriers, benefits, and exposure to safety messages.

Results: Parents did not differ with respect to the perceived safety benefits of booster seats; however they did differ on their intent to use them. Parents in British Columbia were more likely to report that they would always ensure their child rode in a booster seat (87% vs. 69%, $p < 0.001$). Parents' perceptions of the barriers also differed; Manitoba parents were more likely to perceive their children were teased for riding in booster seats. BC parents reported significantly higher rates of exposure to media messaging about booster seats, and greater knowledge that booster seats were legally required for children under nine years of age. Manitoba parents were confused as to whether their province had booster seat legislation, and had less exposure to messaging about booster seats, particularly from physicians (72.7% were never reminded by health professionals vs. 37.5%, $p < 0.001$) and schools (64.6% were never reminded by schools vs. 35.2%, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusions: This research documented significant differences between parents residing in two provinces. In the province with legislation, parents were more likely to use a booster seat, less likely to perceive barriers, and more likely to report exposure to booster seat promotion messages in the media and from physicians and schools. We hypothesize that new booster seat legislation in BC and associated social marketing strategies are the most likely factors influencing these differences.