



TOTS Brief

The Oklahoma Toddler Survey

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Car Seat Safety and Information

Unintentional injuries remain the most common cause of death for children ages 1-4.¹ In 2010 (the latest death data available) the second most common cause of death for Oklahoma children 1-4 years old was motor vehicle crashes.¹

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has, as of March 2011, endorsed placing children in rear-facing car seats until the age of two OR the child reaches the maximum height and

weight requirement for their seat.² This recommendation was supported by research that shows children under the age of two are 75% less likely to be injured if riding in a rear-facing car seat.³

The Oklahoma Toddler Survey (TOTS) collects data (the month the toddler turns two) on car seat placement and on the mother's primary source of information about car seats for her child.

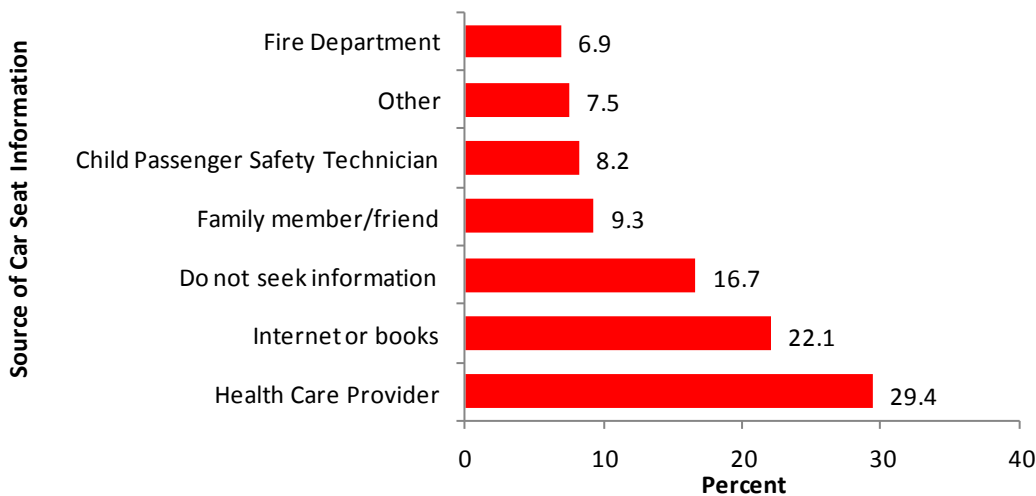
In 2011, 95.9% of mothers reported that their two-year-old sat front-facing in the back seat of their vehicle. This compared to 3.7% who sat rear-facing.

TOTS respondents were then asked where they received most of their information about their two-year-olds' car seat. The most common source of information was a health care provider (29.4%), Figure 1.

In Oklahoma:

- 3.7% of two-year-olds were placed in the back seat in rear-facing position.
- 29.4% of mothers got information about their two-year-olds' car seats from their health care provider.
- 16.7% of mothers did not seek out information about their two-year-olds' car seat.
- Among those mothers who did not seek information about car seats, 11.1% were less than 20 years old and 54.9% had WIC during their pregnancy.

Figure 1. Mother's Source of Information About Two-Year-Old's Car Seat, TOTS 2011



Twenty-two percent sought information on their own from the internet or books and 16.7% reported not looking for or receiving information about car seats.

Among those mothers who reported not looking for or receiving information on car seats (Figure 2):

- 58.3% were 20-29 years old
- 53.8% had more than a high school education
- More than half (54.9%) used Medicaid for their toddler's health care and 54.9% utilized WIC during their pregnancy with the toddler (data not shown)

Limitations for the TOTS data include the following: The recommendation for rear-facing two-year-olds (or until the child met weight/height requirements) did not begin until March of 2011, so not all mothers were equally informed or affected by the AAP changes. These data represent only toddlers who were born in Oklahoma to Oklahoma residents and were residing with their mother at the time of TOTS. With additional years of data, maternal demographics and signifi-

cant associations can be further explored.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health's Injury Prevention Service website includes tips for car seat safety at <http://cps.health.ok.gov>.

For information about how to get a car seat safety check please visit: www.nhtsa.gov/cps/cpsfitting/index.cfm or www.safekids.org

References:

1. National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC. Office of Statistics and Programming, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC using WISQARS™. Accessed at <http://webappa.cdc.gov/cgi-bin/broker.exe>. Obtained November 26, 2012.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP): Policy Statement-Child Passenger Safety Committee on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention. *Pediatrics* 2011; 127(4):788-793.
3. Henary B, Sherwood CP, Crandall JR, et al. Car safety seats for children: rear-facing for best protection. *Inj Prev.* 2007;13(6):398-402.

The Oklahoma Toddler Survey (TOTS) is a two-year follow-back survey to the Oklahoma Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) survey. Mothers with live infants who respond to the PRAMS survey are sent a TOTS survey the month their children turn two-years-old. TOTS is a mixed-mode surveillance system. Two mail surveys are sent in an effort to gain participation followed by telephone surveillance for non-respondents. The unweighted response rate for 2011 data was 70.0% (n=1,396). Data were weighted to represent the two-year-old's birth cohort for those years.

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Figure 2. Age and Education of Mothers Who Did Not Seek Information About Car Seats For Their Toddlers, TOTS 2011

