



## **February 9-15, 2003 is National Child Passenger Safety Week in the US.**

*Child passenger deaths remain a hot topic, especially when older teen brothers or sister are driving. The best advice is don't let teens chauffeur younger kids.*

([PRWEB](#)) February 5, 2003 -- Toronto, Canada - In addition to being the leading cause of death in teens, car crashes are also the leading cause of death in children under age 15 too, across the US.

According to the National Academies' Transportation Research Board, June 18, 2002 press release:

Every year, about 800 school-age children are killed in motor vehicle crashes during normal school travel hours -- weekday mornings and afternoons during school months -- accounting for about 14 percent of the 5,600 child deaths that occur on the nation's roadways. Of these 800 deaths, only about 2 percent are school-bus related, while 74 percent occur in private passenger vehicles and 22 percent are the result of pedestrian or bicycle accidents. More than half of all deaths of children between age 5 and 18 occur during normal school travel hours when a teen-ager is driving.

“Some parents look forward to their teen acting as chauffeur for younger brothers and sisters, but we are concerned that teen drivers are not be ready for the job,” says Gary Direnfeld, executive director of the I Promise Program “teen safe driving initiative.

Direnfeld conducted an email survey of passenger safety experts asking their opinion on teens chauffeuring younger children. Their responses provided for this advice:

- 1) Don't do it. Do not rely on teen drivers to transport younger children. Young children often do not value the authority of a teen driver and may be more prone to acting up and distracting the driver.
- 2) If you must rely on a teen driver to transport younger children, have them learn how to install infant carriers, car and booster seats from a qualified Child Passenger Safety technician. Contact your local police service or hospital to locate an expert in your area.
- 3) Have your infant carrier, car and booster seat inspected to assure it meets all current safety standards.
- 4) Parents, teen drivers and all other passengers must wear their own seat belt at all times, allowing only as many passengers as functional seat belts.

Direnfeld reminds parents that safe driving starts with them, “Kids learn to drive long before they get behind the wheel of a car themselves by watching their parents.” He encourages all parents of teen drivers to enter into a mutual safe driving pact, suggesting programs like his I Promise Program, to help them do so. Parents interested in reading his child passenger report can view it on the website; [www.ipromiseprogram.com](http://www.ipromiseprogram.com)

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