

# Child Restraint Use in Mississippi

To evaluate the effectiveness of Mississippi's child restraint programs, observational surveys are conducted annually in cities throughout the entire state. The surveys and data analysis provide a basis for conclusions about the usage of child restraints in the state. Child restraint use in Mississippi was estimated to be 83.7% for 2013, reflecting an increase of 1.0% over last year (82.7% in 2012). In comparison to other states, child restraint use in Mississippi continues to lag. The most current figures from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) indicate the national average of child restraint use for children under age 8 in 2012 as 91%.

(Occupant Restraint Use in 2012: Results From the National Occupant Protection Use Survey Controlled Intersection Study DOT HS 811 872, January 2014).

# MISSISSIPPI CHILD RESTRAINT SURVEY 2013

*Prepared for:*  
Mississippi Governor's Office of  
Highway Safety  
Division of Public Safety Planning  
Mississippi Department of Public Safety

*Prepared by:*  
J. W. Landrum Observational Survey Laboratory  
David R. Parrish, Caroline Coleman,  
Cameron Higdon & Meagan McNeil

## MISSISSIPPI CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS

**Under 4 years**  
Child restraint device or system

**Ages 4 - 6**

Under 4'9" tall and weighs less than 65 lbs - booster seat system

### NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

**Under 1 year**

Rear-facing car seat

**Ages 1-3**

Rear-facing car seat until seat is outgrown, then forward-facing seat with harness

**Ages 4-7**

Forward-facing seat until seat is outgrown, then booster seat

**Ages 8-12**

Booster seat until child is big enough to be properly restrained by vehicle seat belt alone



MISSISSIPPI STATE  
UNIVERSITY



Safe Kids

# Restraint Usages of Children and Adults

In the 2013 Mississippi child restraint study, there were 6,647 vehicles observed in 40 municipalities during the survey period from March to June. These cars contained a total of 8,548 children estimated to be under the age of 7. A complete analysis of the data resulted in a 2013 overall calculated child restraint usage rate of 83.7% for Mississippi.

Table 1: Child Restraint Used by Type of Location

Type of Location	Using Restraints	Children Observed	Percent Using Restraints (%)
1. Fast Food	1,403	1,623	86.4%
2. Large Shopping Mall	220	275	80.0%
3. Grocery Store	434	523	83.0%
4. Daycare or Child Learning Center	1,535	1,929	79.6%
5. Health Dept. or Human Resources	414	517	80.1%
6. Medical Care Complex	247	309	79.9%
7. Playground, Park, Museum or Zoo	253	277	91.3%
8. Small Shopping Center of Wal-Mart	984	1,207	81.5%
9. Discount or Dollar Store	154	210	73.3%
10. Street Intersection	154	210	73.3%
11. Church or Church Nursery	841	954	88.2%
12. Service Station	490	523	93.7%
13. Restaurant	173	193	89.6%
14. Post Office	6	6	100.0%
15. Bank	2	2	100.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,156</b>	<b>8,548</b>	<b>83.7%</b>

Table 1 provides information on the type of location, the number of children observed and whether they were restrained. It should be noted that none of the locations are definitive of child restraint use at that type of location, but only provide some indication of the level of restraint use.

Table 2: Seat Belt Usage Status for Drivers

Gender	Using Seat Belt	Total Number of Observations	Percent Using Seat Belts (%)
Male	1,212	1,843	65.8%
Female	3,488	4,737	73.6%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,700</b>	<b>6,580</b>	<b>71.4%</b>

In Table 2, the percentage of drivers using seat belts by gender is presented. Of the drivers observed, 73.6% of the female drivers were belted while only 65.8% of the male drivers buckled-up. Overall, 71.4% of the drivers observed were belted.

# Child Restraint Use by Seating Position of Child

It is known that the safest place for a child to be restrained, or for that matter to ride unrestrained, is on the back seat (or second row of seats) of a vehicle. It would, therefore, be expected that adults putting children in the back seat of a vehicle would also have more awareness of the importance of using child restraints. The seating position, as well as whether the child was restrained, was recorded in this survey. See Table 3.

As expected, children in the back seat of automobiles were restrained at a higher rate than were those in the front seat. Children in the back seat were restrained at a rate of 87.9% while children in the front seat were restrained at a rate of 68.7%.

Male drivers were slightly more likely to place a child in the front seat than were female drivers. Children in vehicles with male drivers were placed in the front seat of the automobile 23.8% of the time; as compared to 20.0% when the driver of the vehicle was female. Children placed in the front seat, as opposed to the back seat, were more likely to be unrestrained regardless of the sex of the driver.

Female drivers are slightly more likely to buckle children in the back seat when compared to male drivers. The data suggests about 85.4% of male drivers will utilize some kind of child restraint for backseat children when they are in control of the vehicle, and likewise about 88.9% of female drivers buckle up children in the back when in control of the vehicle. Obviously educational efforts directed at restraining children in motor vehicles and also placing these children on the back seat for safety reasons have had some positive effects in the state of Mississippi. Refer to Table 4 to right for more details.

Table 3: Child Restraint by Position of Child

Seating Position of Child	Children Restrained		Total Number of Children Observed	
	Count	Percent (%)	Count	Percent (%)
Front	1,233	68.7%	1,796	21.1%
Back	5,910	87.9%	6,721	78.9%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,143</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>8,517</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4: Child Restraint by Position of Child by Gender of Driver

Males				
Seating Position of Child	Children Restrained		Total Number of Children Observed	
	Count	Percent (%)	Count	Percent (%)
Front	373	66.0%	565	23.8%
Back	1,544	85.4%	1,808	76.2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,917</b>	<b>80.8%</b>	<b>2,373</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Females				
Seating Position of Child	Children Restrained		Total Number of Children Observed	
	Count	Percent (%)	Count	Percent (%)
Front	860	69.9%	1,231	20.0%
Back	4,366	88.9%	4,913	80.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,226</b>	<b>85.1%</b>	<b>6,144</b>	<b>100.0%</b>