

The Online Parenting Newsletter vol.6 no.5 Apr, 2005:

### AUTOMOBILE SAFETY

Lots of newsletters cross my desk. A recent one from the Arizona Department of Health Services published some disturbing figures. A board that reviews all child deaths found that 48% of 386 deaths in children age 1 through 17 were preventable.

What caused these deaths and how could they be prevented? The two biggies in Arizona are the automobile and swimming pools. (You may be reading this in a Colorado mountain town where there is still snow on the ground so let me just quickly say that no child should be left alone near any body of water, ever.)

But no matter where you live your child is exposed to the hazards of the automobile. I'm sure my readers already know these rules but reinforcement never hurts.

- All kids under 12 ride in the back seat.
- All kids under 40 pounds ride in a child car seat with a harness.
- Kids between 40 and 80 pounds ride in a booster seat with a shoulder-lap seatbelt.
- Babies ride in a rear-facing car seat until 1 year of age and at least 20 pounds.
- Harness straps should be snug (test: only one finger fits under the strap).
- Car seat should be buckled so it cannot move more than one inch.
- Because 4 out of 5 car seats are used incorrectly have yours checked by a trained car seat technician.
- Ask your teens about seat belt use. If you catch them not using a seat belt take away car privileges.

The bad news is that too many children die from accidents. The good news is that many of these

deaths can be prevented.