



# MAKE-IT-CLICK PROGRAM

## NEARLY DOUBLES SAFETY BELT USE RATE IN TWO VIRGINIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



### WHY WE CARE ABOUT THE SAFETY BEHAVIORS OF TWEENS

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children (CDC, 2014). Unfortunately, few vehicle safety programs specifically target 8-12 year olds (tweens). Tweens are at a time of transition, and are just starting to make their own decisions and develop safety habits. Nearly half of the tweens killed in car crashes every year in the US are completely unrestrained (NHTSA, 2014), and 50 to 75% of tweens sit in the front seat when they are the sole passengers in the vehicle (Durbin, Chen, Elliott, & Winston, 2004; Greenspan, Dellinger, & Chen, 2010). These factors increase risk of serious injury or death in a car crash by 45-55%.

### THE MAKE-IT-CLICK PROGRAM

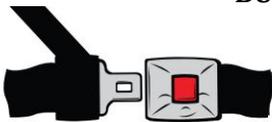
The purpose of the Make-it-Click program was to develop, implement, and evaluate a participative education program targeting increased restraint use and back-seat use among 8-12 year-old children (tweens) in 4 Virginia elementary schools (2 intervention and 2 control). Funded by the Virginia Highway Safety Office and led by Dr. Kelli England Will of Eastern Virginia Medical School, the program's design included involvement of teachers, school staff, and after school organizations (primarily Boys and Girls Clubs of America) to implement components in ways that would not infringe upon academic time in the school setting. The program's interventions were implemented on a rolling basis (1-2 per month) and included:



#### CREATIVITY CONTEST

Students were asked to create an original piece of art to illustrate the theme: "How do I stay safe in a car?" All artwork was displayed throughout the school, with ribbons and loud speaker announcements noting the winning entries. Winners received prizes ranging in cost from \$5 to \$20.

#### BUCKIE BUCKLE PLAY



Was implemented with the help of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. The play increases children's knowledge and use of seatbelts and raises awareness of car safety issues among the audience. Children had play rehearsals once per week after school for 6 weeks. The play was performed at both intervention schools (January-February), and garnered great attendance by parents and schoolmates.

#### BELTED IN THE BACK SEAT CHALLENGE

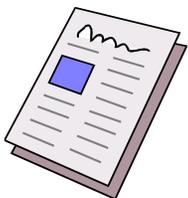


Was implemented with assistance from teachers and guidance counselors. Grades competed to achieve the highest rate of students buckled up and sitting in the backseat. Students helped promote the program and collect the data. Each class in the winning grade received a trophy and framed certificate with the class picture. All students received a Make-it-Click wristband.

#### SAFETY-THEMED ASSIGNMENTS

Several assignments were created that focused on car safety. Each was packaged with teacher lesson notes and tips for how the assignment can fulfill Virginia standards of learning for various subjects.

#### PARENT EDUCATION FLYERS



Five flyers were developed based on feedback garnered from student focus groups. Flyers were sent home with students at various times throughout the school year.

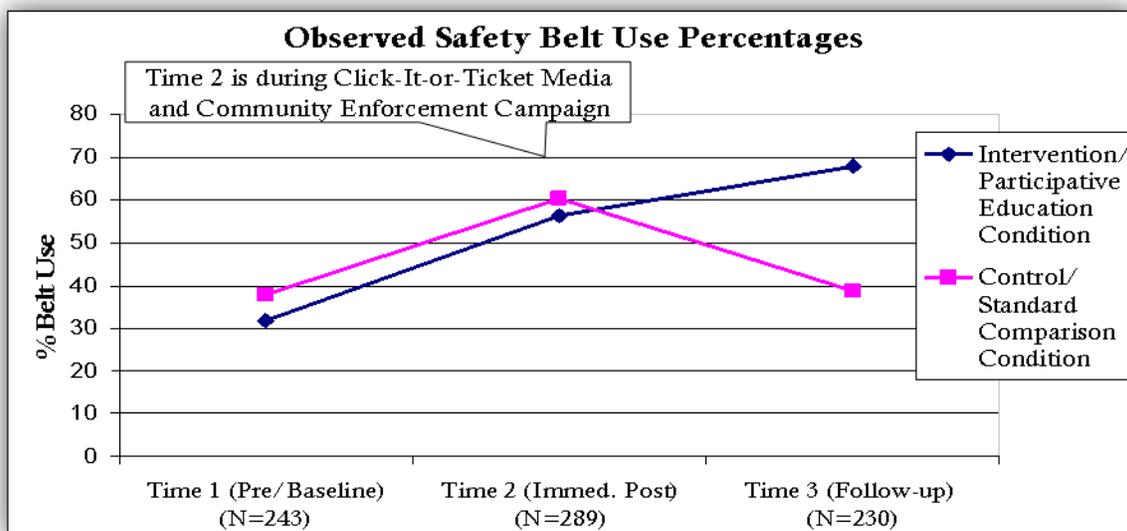
#### TEACHER NEWSLETTERS

Were distributed periodically and were used to describe the program, notify of upcoming plans, and share accomplishments and results of interventions. Newsletters were put in every teacher's mailbox.

Parking lot observations were conducted at the beginning (in September) of the school year at all four schools. Following these observations, the intervention program was implemented in stages throughout the school year at the intervention schools. Post-intervention parking lot observations were conducted at all four schools at the end of the school year (in May) and follow-up observations were conducted after summer break, in September of the following school year. Parking lot observations of tweens' safety belt and back seat use occurred twice per school per phase during drop-off times.

## WHAT WE FOUND

At baseline (pre-intervention), tweens at intervention and control schools had very low seat belt use rates: 31.9% for intervention schools and 37.8% for control schools. After the Make-it-Click program took place in the intervention schools, observations were conducted again. This time, tweens' seat belt use at the intervention schools had increased to 56.2%. However, seat belt use at the control schools had also increased to 60.4%, which was unexpected. We realized that our observations coincided with the 1-month national Click it or Ticket (media + enforcement) campaign, which explained the increase at the control schools. So we decided to conduct observations again after the Click it or Ticket campaign ended.



At the follow-up observations, we found that seat belt use at the control schools had dropped back to its original level: 38.8%. However, tweens' seat belt use at the intervention schools maintained at a significantly higher level than at baseline: 67.9%. This means that **the Make-it-Click program was successful at increasing and maintaining seat belt use among tweens!** In fact, it shows that **tweens at the intervention schools were 3.3 times more likely to wear their safety belts than tweens at the control schools.** Unfortunately, rates of back seat use did not significantly differ between tweens in the intervention and control groups at any phase of the study (overall mean back seat use = 39.6%).

**AUTHOR NOTE:** The Make-it-Click Program was developed, implemented, and evaluated by Dr. Kelli England Will's research team at Eastern Virginia Medical School and funded by the Virginia Highway Safety Office.



### QUESTIONS? FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US:

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