



## NEW YORK STATE

# “Gimmee a Boost!” A Multi-Faceted Community and School Intervention to Increase Booster Seat Use in Rural Communities

### ► AT-A-GLANCE

► **Project Characteristics**  
Multi-Faceted Intervention  
School & Community Focus

► **Program Areas**  
Occupant Protection  
Youth Programs  
Child Passenger Safety

► **Targeted Populations**  
Parents, Caregivers,  
Community Members,  
Children ages 4-8 years old

► **Type of Jurisdiction**  
State (Rural communities)

► **Jurisdiction Size**  
86,000-99,000

► **Funding**  
CDC - \$450,000

► **Contact**  
Debra Douglass, MS, CHES  
NYSDOH Bureau of Injury  
Prevention  
Riverview Center  
150 Broadway, 3W  
Albany, NY 12204  
(518) 473-1143  
[djd04@health.state.ny.us](mailto:djd04@health.state.ny.us)

## Problem Identification

In New York State, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and hospitalization among children between 4 and 8 years of age. Although booster seats reduce injury risk by 59 percent when compared to children using only safety belts, fewer than 20 percent of children ages 4-8 used booster seats in 1999. The counties participating in “Gimmee a Boost!” project were targeted because they had death and hospitalization rates significantly higher than the state rate.

## Goals and Objectives

The goal of “Gimmee a Boost!” A Multi-Faceted Community and School Intervention to Increase Booster Seat Use in Rural Communities is to reduce motor vehicle crash deaths and hospitalizations in the target counties by increasing booster seat use.

The project’s objectives include:

- Identifying barriers and reasons for non-use and determine baseline booster seat use rates;
- Developing, implementing and determining the effectiveness of individual and combined program components by comparing baseline and post-intervention booster seat use rates;
- Promoting agency collaboration to increase community knowledge and awareness of booster seats; and
- Distributing booster seats to children in need and educating parents on their proper use in two counties.

## Strategies and Activities

“Gimmee a Boost!” uses components of the Health Belief Model to create both a public education and awareness campaign and a school campaign targeting grades K-3. The project implemented the following strategies to achieve its goals:

- Managed project activities at the state level with the support of local project coordinators certified as Child Passenger Safety Technicians.
- Implemented all three program components in one county; a second county conducted the public education and awareness campaign coupled with the booster seat distribution program; a third county implemented the school-based campaign.



- Collected booster seat use data through interviews with parents and guardians of 4-8 year olds in each county before and after the interventions.
- Collected booster seat observational data after the interventions.
- Aired three announcements on local radio stations and distributed corresponding brochures to agencies and organizations that provide services to families. Each contained a booster seat hotline number.
- Distributed booster seats to financially disadvantaged families.
- Enlisted the help of local law enforcement and public health staff to perform for kids.
- Created an interactive presentation and performed songs specifically developed to foster a positive image of booster seats for children in grades Kindergarten to grade three.
- Used child volunteers to demonstrate safe riding practices during the presentations.
- Supplied parents and classroom teachers with educational materials to reinforce safety messages conveyed during the presentation.

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## Results

As a successful intervention to promote booster seat usage, the "Gimme a Boost!" campaign achieved the following results:

- Distributed booster seats to over 800 disadvantaged children in two counties.
- Increased reported booster seat use and observed seat use in the three target counties. The largest increase occurred in the county that instituted all three components (from 21 percent to 53 percent).
- Increased knowledge of safe-riding practices among first and second graders who attended presentations. Post-test results showed that students retained this knowledge 6 months later.
- Aired 2,214 radio announcements over 12 radio stations and distributed 30,000 brochures to parents and community members in two counties.
- Provided project data that supported a new law requiring appropriate restraints for children ages 4-7 effective March 27, 2005.
- Identified reasons for booster seat non-use such as the belief that a child is too big or old for a booster seat, lack of knowledge about the injury risks associated with using only safety belts, resistance by children to using them, and lack of a law to enforce their use.