

NEWS RELEASE

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Drivers with child passengers are at higher risk of involvement in fatal crashes

CONTACTS:

Dr. Eduardo Romano romano@pire.org
Dr. Richard Dunn dunn.econ@gmail.com

November 21, 2022 — A new study from the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), the University of Connecticut, and Bates College finds that **adult drivers with child passengers are significantly more likely than those without child passengers to be in fatal crashes**. The research was funded by a grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

In specific, the results of this important driver safety research show that:

- Childhood **crash exposure** when traveling with an adult driver **is low: 0.78% of vehicle miles** traveled by adults included a child passenger.
- The **estimated risk** of a single-vehicle fatal crash was found to be **over 6 times higher when an adult was driving with a child** passenger.
- The risk was **7.2 times higher among female drivers**
- The risk was **5.0 times higher among drivers 25–44** years old.

Lead author, **Dr. Richard Dunn notes**, “Despite their relatively low crash exposure, child passengers are associated with greater risk of being in a fatal crash. The reasons may be that children may engage in distracting behaviors, or that trips with children may be more taxing for adults who need to be on time to day care, work, or other obligations.”

The practical implications of this study include the need to develop public health interventions to remind parents and adult drivers of the risks associated with driving children and take steps to minimize that risk.

Author **Dr. Eduardo Romano** said that: "The practical implications of this study include the need to develop public health interventions to remind parents and adult drivers of the risks associated with driving children and take steps to minimize that risk."

Source: Dunn, Richard & Tefft, Nathan & Romano, Eduardo. (2022). The prevalence and excess mortality risk of driving with children. *Journal of Safety Research*. 10.1016/j.jsr.2022.05.009. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2022.05.009>)

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