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Youth Traffic Injuries and Fatalities

In 1993, there were 18,665 reported motor vehicle accidents. It was recorded that young and inexperienced drivers are involved in more accidents than any other age group. In 1992, drivers eighteen years old or younger accounted for 16% of all drivers involved in fatal accidents. In 2016, drivers eighteen years old and younger comprised 14% of the total number of driver fatalities for SD. Data shows that as the percent of all licensed drivers ages 14 to 19 decreased, the percent of licensed drivers ages 14 to 19 in fatal and injury crashes also decreased from 2000-2015.

For motor vehicle accidents that involved a child in the car, 20% of children under the age of 19 were injured in accident related incidents in 1993. This rate dropped by 40% between 1993-2016, along with fatalities, which also dropped by 17%. Prior to 1994, South Dakota had one of the lowest seatbelt usage rates in the United States. Only 26% of front seat passengers chose to buckle up. In 2016, the nationwide seat belt rate was 90%, however, South Dakota’s rate was under the national average with only 74% of motor vehicles buckling up.

As a teen, one of the most exciting new opportunities can be operating a motor vehicle, but driving can also be one of the most dangerous times too. According to the CDC, motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens. In South Dakota, teenagers are able to obtain an instructional permit at age 14 and an operators license at age 16. Teenagers comprise a higher-risk group of distracted drivers for many reasons. Teens are more likely to speed while they’re driving and also have more cognitive, manual and visual distractions. Texting, driving with other teens in the vehicle, eating and drinking and using mobile apps can account for some distracted driving factors. Between 1993 and 2016, distracted driving fatalities in South Dakota increased by 113%.

Steps to Help Teenagers Become Safer Drivers

Less is more.
Don’t let teenagers drive with passengers their first year

Be a motivational coach.
Act as a co-pilot rather than a taskmaster

Reinforce safety
Strongly enforce seatbelt use

Supervise after licensing
Hold teenagers accountable for their actions
**Child Abuse and Neglect**

In the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Reauthorization Act of 2010, child abuse and neglect is defined as:

*“any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”*

In 2016, there were 1,341 reported victims of neglect, compared to 1,255 reported victims in 2005, in South Dakota. The data show that the two largest victims of child abuse and neglect in South Dakota are American Indian or Alaska Natives and White children in both 2005 and 2016.

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**Recognizing Signs of Abuse and Neglect**

The child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as through preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late and does not want to go home
- Is reluctant to be around a particular person
- Discloses maltreatment

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Youth Risk Behavior Survey of Alcohol & Drug Use by South Dakota High Schoolers

Had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past thirty days

- 61% in 1993
- 28% in 2015

54% DECREASE

Used marijuana one or more times during the past thirty days

- 10% in 1993
- 12% in 2015

20% INCREASE