

Title of Intervention: An Infant Car Seat Program in a Low-Income Community

Intervention Strategies: Group Education, Supportive Relationships, Environments and Policies

Purpose of the Intervention: To increase car seat usage

Population: Low-income families with children

Setting: Local community health center (LCHC) in low-income area of Montreal, Canada; health care facility-based

Partners: The local community health center

Intervention Description:

- **Group Education:** The program was sponsored by the local community health center (LCHC) that also provided prenatal and postnatal information about the use of car seats, training in the use of these restraints and infant car seats (ICS) on free loan. Pregnant women attending prenatal classes at the LCHC were given instructions about car seats in two 30-minute periods, one at the beginning and one at the end of each prenatal course. Parents were shown a film on child passenger safety, correct use of car seats was discussed and the loan program was advertised.
- **Supportive Relationships:** Community health nurses made post-natal home visits to provide passenger safety instruction.
- **Environments and Policies:** Free infant car seats were provided through the loan program for nine months. When the infant car seats were returned, parents were encouraged to buy their own child restraint devices (CRD) suitable for older children.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Not mentioned
- **Training:** Not mentioned
- **Technology:** Not mentioned
- **Space:** Area to store infant car seats, room to conduct group education sessions
- **Budget:** Not mentioned
- **Intervention:** Staff to conduct training/education programs, materials to advertise classes and the car seat loan program
- **Evaluation:** Questionnaires, phones, telephone interview staff, trained observers, observer checklist

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Evaluation
- **Methods and Measures:** An adjacent community of similar socioeconomic status but with no ICS loan program was chosen for comparison. Data was collected through observation and telephone interviews.
 - Parents of children born during the first 18 months of the program were identified and interviewed by telephone, first when the child was 3 months old and then again 10 months later. Each interview asked about owning and using a child restraint device during the last car trip, as well as questions about the mother's socio-demographic characteristics.
 - Observers were placed at specified intersections and, for each vehicle carrying at least one child, they completed a checklist describing the way the child was transported and an estimation of the child's age.

Outcomes:

- **Short Term Impact:** Not measured
- **Long Term Impact:** Greater use of infant seats was observed in the intervention community than in the control community for infants younger than six months old.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: Any intervention targeting car seat use must not only instruct parents but target proper and consistent use. These findings suggest that a community-based loan program can produce short term increases in car seat use rates for infants, even in a low-income community. A strategy to continue providing these restraints is needed to maintain outcomes over time.

Citation(s):

Robitaille, Y., J. Legault, et al. (1990). "Evaluation of an infant car seat program in a low-income community." *Am J Dis Child* 144(1): 74-8.