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AAA analysis underscores car seat safety

New analysis from AAA examined five years of crash data from the U.S. Department of Transportation and points to a lack of proper child-restraint use among children injured or killed in car crashes. The results of this analysis, released by AAA and car seat leader Chicco USA, uncovered that nearly half (48%) of children ages 10 and younger who were injured and half (51%) who were killed in car crashes were using a vehicle seat belt prematurely or no restraint instead of a car seat. Families spend a significant amount of time on the road and, from 2017-21, more than 3.9 million children ages 10 and younger were involved in crashes while riding in a vehicle, 527,000 were injured and 2,789 were killed. Infant seats, boosters and seatbelts will effectively protect young passengers when used properly. The U.S.

Department of Transportation found that child restraints reduce fatalities by 71% for infants younger than 1 and by 54% of children 1 to 4 years old in passenger cars. According to AAA’s analysis, the most recent data from the DoT reflects a need for parents to ensure they are using the correct child-restraint system for each phase of growth. Chicco Child Passenger Safety Technician Josh Dilts offers the following advice for families: Don’t skip the booster phase – The data decreased by more than half in car seat use from age 7 to age 8, an age that saw significant injuries reported. Many parents must not know that seat belt fit is more about the child’s height than age (many state laws focus on age only). Based on their size, children upwards of 10 years old may benefit from using a booster seat. Most booster seats accommodate children as tall as

57 inches. Children should always use a restraint when riding in vehicles – Shifting from a car seat to a vehicle seat belt too early isn’t the only issue. Nearly four in 10 children, ages 7-10, killed in a car crash, were completely unrestrained and, of the youngest children (ages newborn-3), nearly one in four who were killed were unrestrained. Chicco’s Dilts notes that the use of restraints, which is defined by this dataset as not using a car seat, booster seat, seat belt or strapped into the vehicle in any manner, is alarming. Use available resources – Chicco offers the most recent car seat guidelines, installation tutorials and caregiver FAQs on ChiccoUSA.com. Local fire departments often have a child passenger safety technician on hand who can check if your car seat is correctly installed. For more resources, visit AAA.com.

New Hampshire village a skier's utopia

Slopes, adventure and beauty describe North Conway

Skiing is synonymous with Colorado. The state boasts many of the finest slopes and resort towns in the U.S. Millions flock to the state annually for the opportunity to glide down its white-powered mountains.

It's an experience that should be on any skier's bucket list, but one doesn't need to travel across the country to find premier slopes. New Hampshire is hiding a small town that is waiting to be uncovered.

North Conway is home to fewer than 2,500 people and sits in the Mount Washington Valley on the east-central side of the state. It's more than a community. It's a village; a natural wonder comprised of close-knit residents, aged architecture and a chain of mountains.

North Conway is considered to be one of the best ski towns in the U.S. And who could question it?

There are 13 ski areas within a 30-minute drive of the village. Boasting the highest point in the Northeast – Mount Washington at 6,288 feet – North Conway serves as the backdrop to more than 700,000 acres of protected White Mountain Forest.

Norman Rockwell could not have painted a more fitting setting.

The town's lights sparkle through light snowflakes during the winter, giving it a snow-globe persona while assuring guests they couldn't have



TAKE A PEAK – Mount Washington serves as the backdrop to the small town of North Conway, New Hampshire. *Image: amzani81. Adobe Stock.*

chosen a better place in the Northeast to fulfill their famished appetites for adventure.

Visitors can choose from a plethora of winter activities, including skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, skating and dog sledding, to name a few. Enjoy a traditional or romantic sleigh ride over the pristine snow. Witness panoramic mountain views as the sleigh

is drawn through evergreen forests, snowfields and along the Saco River.

Lodging and dining match the outdoors attractions. Guests can choose from country inns, cottages, B&Bs and romantic getaways. Find a spot at a campground or RV resort or choose from a selection of resorts.

An abundance of restaurants and cuisine choices surround North

It's a village, a natural wonder comprised of close-knit residents, aged architecture and a chain of mountains.

Conway. Choose from casual to fine dining, from seafood to barbecue, as well as their farm-to-table menus. Visit a pub or tavern for a toddy and sandwich. Dine aboard a dinner train, ride a chairlift for lunch on the summit or enjoy a themed international meal along with a presentation of the featured region.

North Conway is a year-round destination. Scenic attractions include Diana's Bath Waterfalls, Conway Scenic Railroad, Echo Lake State Park and the Kancamagus Scenic Highway. Alpine slides and ziplines are among the more popular activities in the warm months. The Nor'easter Mountain Coaster takes riders more than 1,400 feet high before dropping them nearly 3,000 feet down the hill.

Playhouses, art centers and museums offer prime entertainment, and a host of golf courses surround the community. Shops and boutiques add ambiance to the downtown district.

Sometimes, it takes a village to create the ideal destination. North Conway is that village.

Educate teenagers about identity theft

Becoming a victim can have serious consequences

Identify theft is one of the fastest growing crimes worldwide. Online pirates search diligently for easy targets and few are more vulnerable than teenagers.

Education and common sense are vital to keeping them out of trouble. The results could be devastating. Here are some situations of which to be aware:

Your teen and the internet – Social websites are as popular with identity thieves as they are with today's youth. Speak with your child about becoming friends only with people they know outside of cyberspace and why they should limit the personal details they share online. Advise them that they shouldn't share their date of birth, full name, address or school. Absence of this information will make it more difficult for criminals to piece together the necessary data to commit identity theft.

Your teen and credit card use – Allowing your teen to get a credit card or to become an authorized user on your credit card account enables him or her to begin building a credit history. It's also an important step in learning good credit habits. As you teach your teen about smart credit



TAKE PRECAUTION – Parents should teach their teens to be aware of cyberthieves. They lurk on the web and are eager to steal identities, credit card numbers and much more. *Image: diy13. Adobe Stock.*

card use, be sure to also speak with them about protecting personal-financial details and the implications that identity theft can have on a person's credit report and score. Teach your teen to carefully review his or

her credit card statements for suspicious transactions and advise your teen against leaving the card out in the open.

When your teen leaves for college – Living in a college dormitory can

be a great student experience, and it will be an even better one if your teen takes steps to protect themselves from potential risks that surround them. From an identity theft perspective, there's usually no need for your teen to take their Social Security card or birth certificate to college. But if he or she must do so, recommend getting a safe-deposit box at a nearby bank and opt to receive bank statements electronically. And as obvious as it may sound, remind your teen to lock their dorm room whenever they leave, and to password-protect their computer and phone to minimize unauthorized access to personal information.

It might seem like a crime that happens only to others, but identity theft is on the rise and the implications of a damaged identity can be severe. Have a dialogue with your teen about identity theft and the simple steps he or she can take to protect their information and privacy.

For parents looking to give their teen extra security, AAA offers FREE identity monitoring to members 18-and-older with enrollment in ProtectMyID®, a product that provides identity-theft detection, protection and fraud-resolution assistance.