Transportation and Field Trip Safety: Child Restraints, Ratios, and Emergency Plans Stats and Facts

FACTS

- **Improper Child Restraints:** Children not properly secured in seat belts or age-appropriate restraints can be thrown during sudden stops or collisions.
- **Uncontrolled Movement Inside Vehicles:** Allowing children to stand, move, or switch seats increases the risk of impact injuries during braking or evasive maneuvers.
- **Inadequate Staff-to-Child Ratios:** Too few supervisors reduces the ability to monitor behavior, enforce restraints, and respond quickly to hazards.
- **Poor Headcounts and Accountability:** Failure to track children during loading, unloading, and transitions can result in children being left behind or entering unsafe areas.
- **Lack of Emergency Planning:** Absence of clear evacuation or shelter procedures delays response during crashes, breakdowns, or external hazards.
- **Driver Distraction and Fatigue:** Noise, behavior management, or long travel times can distract or fatigue drivers, increasing crash risk.

STATS

- In the United States, **school-transportation-related crashes result in multiple fatalities each year**, with children and occupants at risk during transport to and from school activities (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2021–2023).

- NHTSA data shows that **lack of proper restraint use increases the risk of fatal injury in crashes**, particularly in non-traditional transport vehicles used for field trips (recent reporting years).
- In Canada, motor vehicle incidents remain a **leading cause of injury and death among children**, including those occurring during organized transport and school-related travel (Transport Canada, recent data).
- U.S. crash data indicates that **occupant protection (seat belt use) significantly affects injury severity in school transportation incidents**, with unrestrained occupants at higher risk (NHTSA, recent years).
- In Canada, **transportation incidents account for a significant portion of serious injuries involving children in supervised group settings**, including field trips and organized travel (Canadian injury surveillance data, 2021–2023).
- U.S. safety data highlights that **driver-related factors such as distraction and fatigue contribute to a notable share of school transportation crashes**, increasing risk during field trips (NHTSA, recent reporting).