

Carrying Children Safely

In a crash at just 30 mph, an unrestrained child would be thrown forward with a force 30 to 60 times their body weight. They would be thrown about inside the vehicle, injuring themselves and quite possibly seriously injuring (or even killing) other people inside the vehicle. They are also likely to be ejected from the car through one of the windows.



It is not safe to hold a child on your lap. In a crash, the child could be crushed between your body and part of the car's interior.

Even if you are using a seat belt, the child would be torn from your arms - you would not be able to hold onto them, no matter how hard you try.

It is also dangerous to put a seat belt around yourself and a child (or around two children).

The safest way for children to travel in cars is in a child seat that is suitable for their weight and size.

Type of Child Restraint	Weight Range	Approx Age Range
Rearward-facing baby seat	Group 0 for babies up to 10 kgs (22 lbs)	birth to 6-9 months
	Group 0+ for babies up to 13kg (29 lbs)	birth to 12-15 months
Forward-facing child seat	9-18 kgs (20-40 lbs)	9 months - 4 years
Booster Seat	15-25 kgs (33-55 lbs)	4 to 6 years
Booster Cushion	22-36 kgs (48-79 lbs)	6 to 11 years

A properly fitted child restraint keeps the child in their seat, preventing them from being thrown about inside, or ejected from, the vehicle. It also absorbs some of the impact force. This means that your child is much less likely to be killed or injured in a crash.

To be effective, child restraints must be fitted and used correctly. Surveys have consistently shown that a high proportion of child restraints are incorrectly fitted, usually for one or more of these reasons:

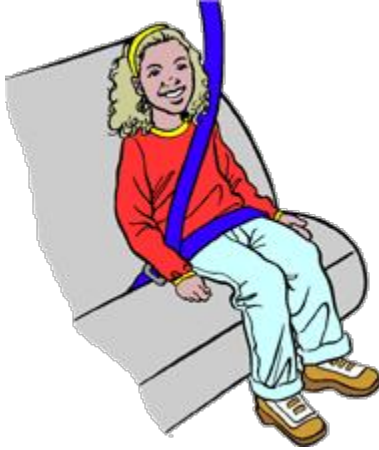
- Seat belt too loose
- Seat belt not routed through child seat correctly
- Buckle crunch (buckle resting against part of the child seat's frame, which means that in a crash it might break or snap open)
- Handle on baby seat not positioned properly
- Child seat not compatible with car
- Child seat old and in bad condition
- Child too large or too small for the seat they are using.

Booster Seats

By the time children weigh 15 - 25 kgs (33 - 55 lbs) (usually about 4 to 6 years old, but the weight is the most important factor) they are ready to use booster seats. This means that the adult seat belt will go around them and the seat. So it is important that the seat belt is correctly adjusted. The basic points to note are:

- the belt should be worn as tight as possible
- the lap belt should go over the pelvic region (from hip-bone to hip-bone), not the stomach
- the diagonal strap should rest over the shoulder, not the neck.





Seat Belts

Seat belts are designed for people 150 cms (about 5ft) and taller. Don't let your child graduate to using the seat belt on its own too soon. Children are usually big enough to use the seat belt on its own by the time they are about 11 years old, although this varies from child to child.

Three-point seat belts (lap and diagonal) provide greater protection than lap belts. However, lap belts are far better than no belt at all.

The lap belt should be placed over the pelvis (from hip-bone to hip-bone), not the stomach and worn as tight as possible.

Passenger Restraints

Some passengers with disabilities may need postural support during the journey, and a variety of passenger restraints to assist people to remain upright in their seat are available. Under no circumstances should they be used instead of a suitable seat belt as they do not conform to a recognised standard nor are they designed for this purpose.