



Booster Seats

Children who have “graduated” from child safety seats to using safety belts too soon pose special safety concerns. Children less than 4 feet 9 inches tall (about 8 years old) do not fit safely in vehicle seats and seat belt systems. Booster seats lower the risk of injury to children in crashes by 59 percent compared to using only a safety belt.

Children also often find booster seats more comfortable than safety belts. With booster seats, the shoulder belt does not rub their neck and they can see out the window better.

Who should use a booster seat?

- A child whose ears come to the top of the convertible safety seat
- A child who is 4 to 8 years old
- A child who is less than 4 feet 9 inches tall
- A child who cannot sit straight against the vehicle's seat back cushion and bend his or her legs over the edge of the seat without slouching

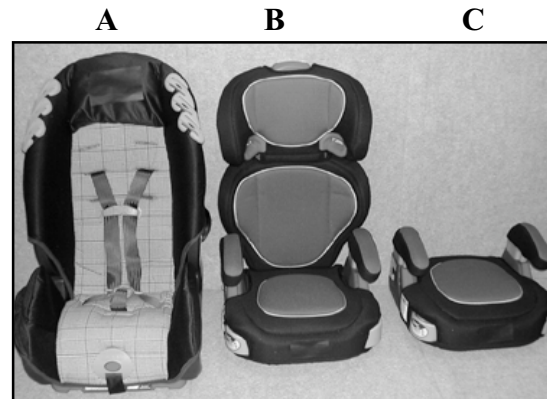
Reasons to use a booster seat

- A booster seat is the step between a convertible child safety seat and the vehicle safety belt.
- The booster seat raises the child so the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt fits correctly.
- A properly fitting lap and shoulder belt reduces the risk of abdominal, spinal cord and head injuries.

Choose the correct booster seat

If your child weighs 30 to 40 pounds, select a booster or combination seat with a five-point harness (A). This is a good option for a child too tall for a convertible seat.

- Install a booster seat with harnesses like you would a forward-facing car seat.
- Use a booster seat with harnesses until your child weighs 40 pounds. (A)



A – Combination seat with five-point harness

B – High-back booster seat

C – Low-back booster seat

If your child weighs 40 to 80 pounds, select a booster seat without a harness. This can be a high-back booster (B) or a low-back booster (C). If your child has been using a seat with a removable harness (A), remove the harness to convert it to a high-back booster (B).

- Always use a booster seat with a vehicle's lap *and* shoulder belts.
- Put the booster on the seat of the car. Have the child sit in it. Place the shoulder and lap belt across the child and buckle it.
- Put the shoulder belt through the comfort guide so it lies across the center of the child's shoulder. The lap belt should lie low across the child's hips.





B



C

- Booster seats can be used until the child weighs 80 to 100 pounds. Check the labels on your child's seat.
- Older children may prefer a low-back booster (C) because it is less visible. Only use a low-back booster if the child will sit in it without squirming and if the vehicle has a head restraint. Use the comfort guide found on a strap that hooks into the booster seat to adjust the shoulder belt across your child's shoulder.

Installing a booster seat

- Always read the booster seat's instructions and your vehicle's manual before installing the booster seat.
- Do not use the lower anchors and tethers (LATCH) with a booster seat without a harness.

Buckle up

All children ages 12 and younger are safest when properly restrained in the back seat, especially in vehicles with front seat passenger air bags.

- Texas law requires all children under age 17 to ride with seatbelts fastened. Children younger than age 5 and less than 36 inches tall must ride in a safety seat. Insist that children ride buckled or in safety seats on every ride, no matter the length of the trip.
- Always buckle up. Children learn what they see. If you buckle up, they will too.
- Avoid calling a booster seat a car seat. Try calling it a "big kid's seat" or a "captain's chair" instead.

When it's safe to let your child use a safety belt

A child is usually safest in a booster seat until he or she is 4 feet 9 inches tall. Check how your child fits the back seat of your car. It's best not to let your child use only a safety belt until your child can:

- (1) Sit with his or her back fully against the vehicle's seat back cushion.
- (2) Bend his or her legs over the edge of the seat without slouching.
- (3) Ride sitting up in the seat.

The lap belt should fit low across the child's hips and the shoulder belt should lie flat across the center of the shoulder. Never let a child put the shoulder belt behind the back or under an arm. The shoulder belt protects the head and spinal cord and reduces the risk of internal injuries in a crash. Remember that riding in the back seat is 30 percent safer than riding in the front seat.

For more information, visit the Texas Children's Center for Childhood Injury Prevention Web site at www.texaschildrenshospital.org/InjuryPrevention or call 832-828-1314.



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