



Child Passenger Safety

[http:// www.boosterseat.gov/](http://www.boosterseat.gov/)

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>

Child Car Safety Seats

If you see an unbuckled child in a moving vehicle, call **1-800-505-BABY**. The Office of Highway Safety will ask you for the license number and state on the car, the city where it occurred and the location of the child (front seat, driver's lap, etc.). The car owner will receive a letter saying that an unrestrained child was observed, and that the law requires children under five to be properly secured. The letter is not a ticket, but an opportunity to educate the owner of the vehicle about keeping children safe in the car.

The number one killer of children in Oregon is motor vehicle accidents. One simple item could help save countless children is a car safety seat.

A disturbing fact comes from a recent study by the SAFE KIDS organization: **one third of children are riding in the wrong restraints for their age and size.**

- 33% of children were in the wrong restraint for their size and age.
- 63% of kids who should have been in belt-positioning booster seats (typically ages 4 to 8) were inappropriately restrained.

Here are some questions to ask yourself about the safety of your child when it comes to riding in a vehicle:

Does your child ride in the back seat? The back seat is generally the safest place in a crash. If your vehicle has a passenger air bag, it is essential for children 12 and under to ride in back.

Does your child ride facing the right way? Infants should ride in rear facing restraints (in the back seat) until age 1 and at least 20-22 lbs. Infants who weigh 20 lbs. before 1 year of age should ride in a restraint approved for higher rear facing weights. Always read your child restraint manual for instructions on properly using the restraint. Children over age one and at least 20 pounds may ride facing forward.

Does the safety belt hold the seat tightly in place? Put the belt through the correct slots. If your safety seat can be used facing either way, use the correct belt path for each direction. Check the vehicle owner's manual and safety seat instruction book for guidance.

Is the harness buckled snugly around your child? Keep harness straps snug over the child's shoulders. Place the chest clip at armpit level.

Does your child over 40 pounds have the best protection possible? Keep your child in a safety seat with a full harness as long as possible, at least until 40 pounds. Then use a belt-positioning booster seat which helps the adult lap and shoulder belt fit better. A belt-positioning booster seat is preferred for children between 40-80 pounds. It is used with the adult lap and shoulder belt.

How should a safety belt fit an older child? The child should be tall enough to sit without slouching, with knees bent at the edge of the seat, with feet on the floor. The lap belt must fit low and tight across the upper thighs. The shoulder belt should rest over the shoulder and across the chest. Never put the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the child's back. The adult lap and shoulder belt system alone will not fit most children until they are at least 4'9" tall and weigh about 80 pounds.