

NHTSA'S UPDATED CHILD RESTRAINT RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Messages

- Child safety is a top priority and we want to ensure parents and caregivers have clear information when selecting the right restraint type for their child.
- We updated our recommendations to reflect new child restraints on the market, many of which can accommodate children to higher weights.
- There are seats that can accommodate children from birth through 65 pounds, and a few even higher to 80 pounds. This allows children to continue to use a particular restraint longer.
- Kids come in different shapes and sizes and grow at different rates. The best child seat or booster is the one that fits your individual child. Select a seat based on your own child's age, weight, height and physical development.
- Parents and caregivers should always read child seat manufacturers' instructions and the vehicle owner's manual for important information on height and weight limits and how to install the seat.

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents to keep their toddlers in rear-facing car seats until age 2. It also advises that most children will need to ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until they have reached 4 feet 9 inches tall and are between 8 and 12 years of age.

- Our updated recommendations are consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics advice to keep children rear-facing as long as they fit within the height and weight limits of the car seat. Depending on the child, this may result in many children riding rear-facing to age two or older.
- We also agree that most children will need to ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until they have reached 4 feet 9 inches tall, which could be up to 12 years of age. And that all children under 13 should ride in the back seat.
- NHTSA also recommend that parents keep their child in a car seat with a harness for as long as their child fits within the height and weight requirements.

General Points

- Child seats and booster seats are key tools for protecting children from severe injury in the event of a crash.
- Proper installation of child seats and booster seats is vital to keeping kids safe. Before installing be sure to read the owner's manual. To ensure proper installation of child seats, parents can also visit a national network of trained and certified technicians by visiting www.nhtsa.gov
- All child restraints sold in the United States are required to meet federal safety standards.

Statistics:

- Over 30 years of research and real world experience has shown unequivocally that child restraints save lives and reduce injuries.
- NHTSA's 2009 child fatality data found that motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for young people ages 3 to 14. In 2009, an average of four children age 14 and younger was killed and 490 were injured every day.
- Other NHTSA research on the effects of early graduation from child safety seats to booster seats for children ages 3 to 4 found a significantly lower injury risk for the children in safety seats than for those in booster seats. Staying in a booster seat rather than an early graduation to adult belts for child passengers age 4 to 8 likewise resulted in significantly fewer injuries.
- All 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have laws requiring the use of safety seats for young children traveling in automobiles. Also, 47 states have laws requiring booster seat use.