

Child Passenger Safety

*“We’re only going to the grocery store.”
“He’ll stop crying if I hold him on my lap.”
“She thinks she’s too old to be in a car seat.”*

Do any of these sound familiar? They’re common reasons parents give for not putting their children in appropriate car seats or seat belts. Unfortunately, unrestrained or improperly restrained children are far more likely to be injured, to suffer more severe injuries, and to die in the event of a crash.

Wisconsin’s child passenger safety law requires:

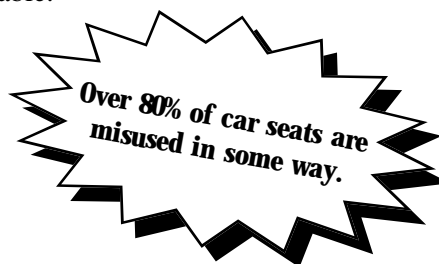
- Children under age 4 must ride properly restrained in a child safety seat.
- Children ages 4-8 must ride in a child safety seat, including a booster seat, when needed. (See the Five-Step Test.)
- All other passengers must ride in a seat belt.

Five-Step Test

Did you know most children ages 4-8 need a booster car seat? Try this simple test:

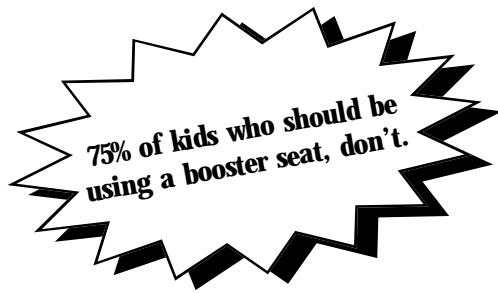
1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child’s knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered “NO” to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to ride safely in the car. And, kids like boosters because they are more comfortable.



For your child’s safety, follow these **Safety Tips**:

- Install the seat correctly; check both your child safety seat instruction manual and your vehicle owner’s manual for proper installation directions.
- Return your car seat registration card so you can be notified if there is a recall.
- The safest place for children is always in the back seat.
- Replace any car seat that has been in a crash.
- Don’t buy a second-hand car seat—it may have been recalled, in a crash, or be missing key components.
- Use a safety seat every time and every ride, no matter how short a distance.
- For more information, contact:
 - Wisconsin Information Network for Safety 1-866-511-9467 or www.dot.state.wi.us/dtim/bts/safety-child.htm
 - National Safe Kids Campaign—www.safekids.org
 - NHTSA Auto Safety Line 1-888-DASH-2-DOT or www.nhtsa.dot.gov



Types of Booster Seats

Shield Booster

- Use only when no shoulder belts are available.
- Realize shield booster is less effective for taller children.
- Remove shield booster when child is 40 pounds and use base with lap/shoulder belt.

High Back Booster

- Use with child from 30 to 80 pounds.
- Provides head, neck, and spine support.
- May include a five-point harness that can be used until child is 40 pounds.
- When child is 40 pounds, remove harness and use as belt-positioning booster.

Belt-positioning Booster Base

- “Boosts” child up so seat belt fits correctly.
- Use until child is 80 pounds.

To have your seat inspected to see if you have installed it correctly, contact WINS for a referral (1-866-511-9467). They can or refer you to someone who is certified to do so.



Forward-facing convertible car seat

Children over age 1 who are 20 to 40 pounds

- Route harness straps in the upper slots at or above your toddler’s shoulder level, or at the level set by the manufacturer.
- Put car seat into upright position.
- Keep harness straps snug and fasten harness clip at child’s armpit.
- Attach tether to vehicle’s anchor bolt.
- Install in the back seat; if you must install in the front seat, make sure the front seat is moved all the way back.

Forward-facing booster seat with internal five-point harness

Children over age 1 who weigh up to 40 pounds

- Check manufacturer’s instructions for weight limit.
- Remove the 5-point harness to convert seat to belt-positioning booster seat when your child weighs more than 40 pounds.

Belt-positioning booster seat

Children 40 - 80 pounds, usually 4 - 8 years

- Use booster seat only with vehicle’s lap and shoulder belts.
- Position lap belt low over hips and upper thighs and shoulder belt over shoulder and collarbone.
- If the vehicle offers no head support and your child’s ears are above the back seat of the car, place your child in a high-back booster seat.

Sources:

- “You Wouldn’t Make Your Kids Wear Your Clothes...So Why Do You Think Your Seat Belt Will Fit Them.” Wisconsin Department of Transportation. 2001.
- “Wisconsin’s Safety Belt and Child Passenger Safety Laws.” Wisconsin Safe Kids Coalition. (Undated).
- “Parent’s Guide to Child Passenger Safety.” Wisconsin Department of Transportation. 2000.
- “Most Parents Don’t Use Car Seats Properly.” Living Healthy. Fall, 2001.

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