

KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE IN THE CAR

A GUIDE TO CAR SEATS

Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources

You can keep your child safe in the car by always using a correctly fitted car seat.

There are different types of car seats to suit your child's age and size.

This booklet will help you to find the answer to these questions:

- Why use a car seat?
- Which is the right car seat for my child?
- How do I fit and install a car seat?

WHY USE A CAR SEAT?

The most important reason for using a car seat is to protect your child.

An approved and properly fitted car seat may reduce the risk of death or serious injury in road crashes by up to 70%.

The law requires that:

- Children from birth to 7 years old must be in a correctly fitted car seat.
- Children from 7 years to 16 years old must continue to use a correctly fitted car seat or seatbelt depending on their size.
- If you don't have your child in a correctly fitted car seat it could cost you 3 demerit points and a \$350 fine.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Your car seat must meet the Australian Standards.

This means it will have the AS/NZS 1754 code on the label.

WHICH IS THE RIGHT CAR SEAT FOR MY CHILD?

This table will help you choose the right car seat for your child.

The car seat must suit your child's age and size.

It is important not to move your child from one car seat to another too early.

						Age (years)	
Birth	6 months	1	2	3	4	5	
REAR FACING CAR SEAT							
	FORWARD FACING CAR SEAT						
					BOOSTER SEAT		



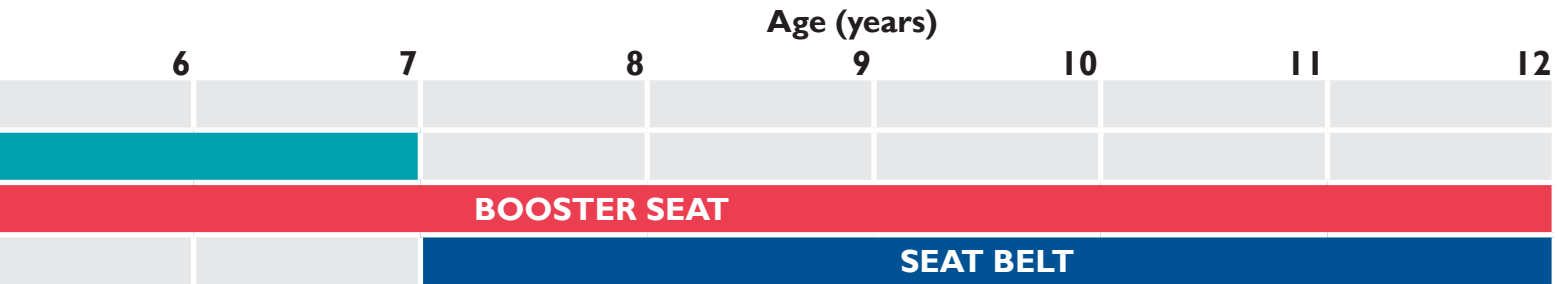
REAR FACING CAR SEAT

- Children from birth to 6 months old must be in a rear facing car seat with an inbuilt harness.
- Keep your child in the rear facing car seat as long as they fit comfortably.



FORWARD FACING CAR SEAT

- Once your child outgrows the rear facing car seat they can move to a forward facing car seat with an inbuilt harness.
- When your child is four years or older, or is too big to fit comfortably in a forward facing car seat, they can move to a booster seat with a properly fitted seatbelt or harness.



BOOSTER SEAT

- Once your child is too big to fit comfortably in the forward facing car seat they can move to a booster seat with a properly fitted seatbelt or harness.
- Booster seats with a high back and side support provide the best protection in a crash.



SEAT BELT

- Children over 7 years should continue to use a booster seat as long as they fit comfortably before moving into a seat belt.

The 5 Step Test in this booklet will help you to make this decision.

WHEN SHOULD I MOVE MY CHILD TO THE NEXT TYPE OF CAR SEAT?

Children need different types of car seats as they grow.

Young children should move to the next type of car seat once they reach the manufacturer's maximum height/weight limit for the car seat.

A child's height and weight are important to consider when choosing the right car seat or booster seat:

- If a child is too tall or heavy for their car seat they can use the car seat for the next age group.
- If a child is too small to move into the next type of car seat for their age they should stay in the car seat for the previous age group.

Some car seats can be adjusted to fit your child as they grow.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: What to look for when buying a car seat.

Always buy a car seat that fits your child, never buy a car seat that is too big.

SECOND-HAND OR USED CAR SEATS

It is ok to use a second hand or used car seat if it is in good condition.

It is important to check that:

- it has not been in a crash
- there are no obvious signs of wear and tear
- the harness straps are not stretched, torn or fraying
- it is not sun damaged.

Don't use a car seat that is more than 10 years old.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN MY CHILD CAN USE A SEATBELT?

Most children do not fit into a seat belt properly until they are around 12 years old.

The 5 Step Test can help you check if your child is ready to wear an adult seat belt.

'THE 5 STEP TEST'

The "5 Step Test" to check if your child is ready to move from a booster to a seat belt

- 1 Can your child sit all the way back against the seat? ✓ or x
- 2 Do your child's knees bend comfortably in front of the edge of the seat? ✓ or x
- 3 Does the sash (shoulder) belt sit across the middle of the shoulder not on the neck or the arm? ✓ or x
- 4 Is the lap belt sitting low across the hip bones touching the thighs? ✓ or x
- 5 Can your child stay seated like this for the whole trip? ✓ or x

5 ✓ = YES Seat belt
Less than 5 ✓ = NO Booster seat

HOW DO I INSTALL A CAR SEAT?

To keep your child safe the car seat must be properly installed in your car.

If it is not properly installed it could come loose or move and your child could be injured in a crash.

You can install a car seat yourself.

The car seat should come with instructions (manufacturer's instructions) on how to install it. You should follow the instructions step by step.

Most car seats need to be connected to an anchor point to hold them tightly in place.

If you can't find an anchor point check your vehicle's owners manual, If you don't have an anchor point you must get one made and fitted by a professional.

If you want help to install a car seat RACT or an accredited car seat fitter can help.

For more information on ISOFIX visit:
www.dier.tas.gov.au



WHERE SHOULD A CAR SEAT GO IN THE CAR?

The back seat of the car is the safest place to put a car seat and for children to sit.

The safest position to put a car seat is the middle of the back seat or the left hand passenger side.

Children under 4 years old can sit in the front seat if the car does not have a back seat. But the child must be in an approved car seat that has been properly fitted and secured.

A child that is over 4 years old can sit in the front seat if the back seat is full of other younger children. But the child must be in an approved car seat or booster seat that has been properly fitted.

Children 7 years and older should sit in the back seat if there is room, but can legally sit in the front.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A rear facing car seat should never be used in the front seat if there is a passenger airbag, because it is dangerous.

EXEMPTIONS

Children with a medical condition or physical disability can receive a car seat exemption.

Parents and carers should seek advice from a health professional, such as an occupational therapist, who can recommend the restraint/seat which is best for the child.

Visit www.dier.tas.gov.au for more information.

TAXIS AND BUSES

Taxis and public buses are exempt from supplying car seats, therefore children are not required to be seated in a car seat when travelling by taxi or bus.

However all passengers including children must wear seatbelts if they are fitted.

Children under 12 months old are allowed to sit on the lap of an adult passenger in the back of a bus or taxi.

Never let children share a seatbelt with another passenger because it is dangerous.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: How do I properly fit my child into the car seat?

Check the car seat properly fits your child every time you buckle them up.

The child should fit comfortably in the car seat.

Tighten straps and harness so they are above the shoulder, but not above the ear. If you can pinch the strap, then it is too loose.

If the straps are too loose the child will move around and could even come out of the car seat if you stop suddenly or are in a crash.

Make sure all buckles are securely fastened.

For more information on child car seats contact:



Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources

Telephone: 1300 135 513

Website: www.dier.tas.gov.au

Kidsafe

Telephone: 0417 381 721

Website: www.kidsafetas.com.au

RACT (APPROVED FITTERS)

Telephone: 13 27 22

Website: www.ract.com.au

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This booklet is a collaboration between the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, Kidsafe and the RACT.



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