

## Child Booster Seats



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To further highlight the risk, highway safety advocates report that traffic collisions are the leading cause of death for children ages nine and younger. More than 350 children ages four-to-seven are killed and 50,000 injured annually in motor vehicle crashes, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Most alarming, half of the fatally injured children were not restrained at all.

Using booster seats lowers the injury risk by 59 percent compared with belt use alone, according to studies by the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Fatality rates using a booster seat instead of a seat belt alone were reduced by 28 percent.

The statistics clearly point out the importance of safety restraint systems and booster seats to reduce the number of child injuries and fatalities in motor vehicles. However, for safety reasons the age and weight of a child should not be the only reason to use a booster seat.

Car seat safety advocates recommend this 5-step test to determine if your child needs a booster seat:

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

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child may need a booster seat.

The California Highway Patrol and many law enforcement agencies have public awareness campaigns to help parents understand the importance of child passenger safety. Many law enforcement agencies and pediatric hospitals also offer free demonstrations on how to secure baby and booster seats in the safest way for your particular car.

For more information you can contact the CHP, your local law enforcement agency or your nearest hospital to see if they have a child safety seat program.

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