

## Australian LAW:

7 to 16 Years.

Car-Seat, Booster OR

Adult Seat-Belt Only.

Back Seat is

Recommended.



**STEP 4: BACK SEAT** of the car for as long as possible, if there are back seats available.

**LAW: Until AT LEAST 7 years old.**

**RECOMMENDED: Up to 12 years old.**

Children should always sit in the back seat of the car if there are seats available in the back. Adult seat-belts are designed for adult bodies over 145cm tall. Front air-bags are designed for adults and can cause **SEVERE** injuries to children in the front seat. It is not a treat for children to travel in the front. If a child over the age of 4 needs to sit in the front because all back seats are taken by younger children, a non-anchored booster seat **MUST** be used.

If a booster seat is outgrown before the age of 7, invest in a larger booster for children up to 10 years of age.

**Do not** progress your child out of their booster seat and into an adult seat-belt alone until they can pass the **FIVE STEP TEST.**

**Step 1:** Can the child sit up straight with their back flat all the way against the vehicle seat?

**Step 2:** Do the child's knees bend comfortably over edge of the vehicle seat without needing to slouch?

**Step 3:** Does the lap part of the belt sit low across the tops of the child's hips and thighs?

**Step 4:** Does the shoulder part of the belt sit comfortably between the child's neck and shoulder?

**Step 5:** Can the child sit properly in this position for the **ENTIRE** trip, keeping the seat-belt positioned properly?

A child must **NEVER** place the adult seat-belt behind their back or under their arm as this could lead to severe head, spinal and internal injuries in a crash.

**Remember that a lap-only belt should be avoided by all passengers as they provide no upper torso support in the event of a collision. Consider retrofitting a full shoulder sash and lap belt for optimum safety for all passengers.**

## Extra safety tips for kids in cars:

\* **Always read your car-seat instruction manual** and follow the instructions for use exactly. If in doubt, visit an authorised restraint fitter to instruct you on the correct use of your restraint. New seats have height limits, old seats have weight limits. Seats must meet Australian Standards AS/NZS 1754, Red Five Tick Sticker.

\* Harness straps should be snug and lay flat across the child's body. They should **NEVER** be loose or twisted. A child can be ejected from the seat in a crash if the straps are too loose. Twisted straps can cause severe injuries to a child in a crash. **NEVER** allow your child to pull their arms out of their harness straps, or to place the seat-belt behind their back. This leaves the child with **NO** upper body support in the event of a crash, which can result in head, spinal and internal injuries or death.

\* Car-seats have a **ten year life span** from the date of manufacture. **Do not** use a car-seat that is older than 10 years old. **Beware 2nd Hand.** The plastics, harnesses and buckles in seats can deteriorate over time, rendering them unsafe in a crash. Destroy old seats so they cannot be re-used. Cut the harness straps and the cover and place in the household rubbish bin with the buckles. The plastic shell can go into your local plastic recycling. Use a marker pen and write "Danger/Crashed" on the shell.

\* Destroy car-seats that have been involved in a crash as they are no longer safe. They could have hairline fractures that are invisible to the naked eye. **Beware 2nd Hand.** Check with the manufacturer and your insurance company for insurance or exchange programs.

\* **Never** leave children alone in a car. **Never** smoke with children in the car. Protect their health and safety.

\* Secure all loose items in the car and only allow soft toys in the car. Unsecured cargo, groceries and entertainment systems can become dangerous projectiles in the event of a crash, causing severe injuries to all occupants. (Pets should also be correctly restrained in the car).

\* The ages referred to in the child-restraint laws are the **BARE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT ONLY.** Keep your children in each level of child restraint until they reach the **MAXIMUM** height or weight limits for their car-seat. Moving them up to the next level too soon is not a milestone to look forward to, it is a step down in safety which can cause injuries or death in a crash.

• Car crashes are the leading cause of accidental injury and death for children in Australia. Most children who are killed or injured in car crashes were not correctly restrained in the car. You cannot control when a crash will happen, but you can restrain your kids correctly.

## Car Safety for Kids in Australia

Four important steps to keep your kids **SAFE** in the car.

### Buckle Up!



1. **Rear-Facing:** Keep babies & toddlers in a rear-facing car-seat with in-built harness for as long as possible.  
**LAW: Until AT LEAST 6 months old.**  
**RECOMMENDED: Up to 2 to 3 years old.**
2. **Forward-Facing:** Keep pre-school and early school-aged children in an in-built harness car-seat for as long as possible.  
**LAW: Until AT LEAST 4 years old.**  
**RECOMMENDED: Up to 5 to 8 years old.**
3. **Booster Seat:** Keep older school-aged children in a booster seat with full adult seat-belt for as long as possible.  
**LAW: Until AT LEAST 7 years old.**  
**RECOMMENDED: Up to 8 to 10 years old.**
4. **Back Seat:** Keep all children in the back seat of the car for as long as possible.  
**LAW: Until AT LEAST 7 years old.**  
**RECOMMENDED: Up to 12 years old.**

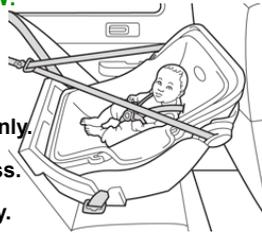
Ages are approximate. Child growth is individual. Children are safest using each stage of car-seat for as long as they still fit. Installed correctly. Strapped in correctly. On **EVERY** trip.

**For more information:**  
**Rear-Facing Down Under**  
(Non-Profit)

**Website:** [www.rearfacingdownunder.com](http://www.rearfacingdownunder.com)  
**Email:** [rearfacedownunder@gmail.com](mailto:rearfacedownunder@gmail.com)  
**Find us:** [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Pinterest](#) & [Twitter](#)

**Australian LAW:**

Newborn to 6 Months. Rear-Facing Only. In-Built Harness. Back Seat Only.



Tether Strap Must be Connected to Vehicle Anchor Point.

**STEP 1: REAR-FACING** from newborn for as long as possible until the child outgrows the height or weight limit for rear-facing.

**LAW: Until AT LEAST 6 months old.**

**RECOMMENDED: Up to 2 to 3 years old.**

Rear-facing is the **SAFEST** way for infants and toddlers under the age of 4 years to travel in the car. They have heavy heads that are large in proportion to the rest of their body. The bones in their neck are weak and soft and will not begin to harden until after the age of 2. When a young child is sitting in a forward-facing position in a collision, their head is thrown violently forwards upon impact. This puts all the force of the crash onto their delicate spine. The bones in their neck are not yet strong enough to protect the spinal cord under such forces.

Sitting in a rear-facing position protects young children in a crash. Their head, neck and spine are kept perfectly aligned; they are cradled by the back of their car-seat, which absorbs the force of the crash instead of the child's neck. The child is not thrown forward upon impact. Rear-facing is a much gentler way for young children to ride down a collision and protects them from injuries.

Children should remain rear-facing for as long as possible until they have outgrown the height or weight limits of their rear-facing car-seat. If an infant capsule is outgrown, invest in a 0-4 years convertible car-seat to keep your child rear-facing for longer.

For rear-facing, the harness straps should be positioned in the slots at or slightly above your child's shoulders and never below their shoulders.

**NEVER** wrap or swaddle a baby under the harness straps. This will render the straps too loose and your baby could be ejected from the vehicle in an accident. Place blankets **OVER** the harness straps after tightening and adjusting.

It is not a safety risk for a child's feet to touch the back of the vehicle seat. Older toddlers can sit with their legs bent or crossed quite comfortably. Rear-facing can also provide a more comfortable and safer sleeping position in the car compared to forward-facing where a child's head may slump and their breathing may be obstructed.

**Australian LAW:**

6 Months to 4 Years. Rear-Facing OR Forward-Facing. In-Built Harness. Back Seat Only.



Tether Strap Must be Connected to Vehicle Anchor Point.

**STEP 2: FORWARD-FACING** in-built harness car-seat for as long as possible until the child outgrows the height or weight limit for the car-seat.

**LAW: Until AT LEAST 4 years old.**

**RECOMMENDED: Up to 5 to 8 years old.**

An in-built 6-point harness car-seat is the safest option for children who have outgrown their rear-facing car-seats. The 6-point harness distributes the crash forces over the bony areas of the shoulders and the hips, instead of the soft abdominal area. The harness straps should fit snugly across the child's body and **NEVER** be loose or twisted.

For forward-facing, the harness straps should be positioned in the slots nearest your child's shoulders, but not more than 2.5cm above or below their shoulders.

**Do not** allow the child to slip their arms out of the harness straps. This will leave the child with no upper body support in the event of a crash.

**Do not** dress the child in thick, bulky coats in their car-seat, as this will make the harness straps too loose in the event of an crash. Place coats and blankets over the top of the harness straps for extra warmth.

Toddlers and young pre-school aged children should not be placed in a booster seat with an adult seat-belt or accessory H-Harness, as this puts them at risk of serious injuries in the event of a crash. Adult seat-belts can ride up onto their vulnerable abdominal area and cause internal injuries.

Children in this age group do not yet have the maturity to sit for long periods in an adult-seat belt and they will frequently put the seat-belt behind their back and lean forward, leaving them with no upper body support in the event of a crash, putting them at risk of head, spinal and internal injuries.

If a 0-4 years forward-facing seat is outgrown before the age of 4, invest in a larger car-seat with in-built 6-point harness to keep your child harnessed for as long as possible. (Fully harnessed seat OR convertible booster)

Remember to keep adjusting the seat as the child grows. Move the straps and the headrest up for a good fit.

**Australian LAW:**

4 to 7 Years. Car-Seat OR Booster Seat. Back Seat if Available.



Tether Strap Must be Connected to Vehicle Anchor Point if Included on Booster Seat.

**STEP 3: BOOSTER SEAT** for as long as possible until the child outgrows the height or weight limit of the booster seat.

**LAW: Until AT LEAST 7 years old.**

**RECOMMENDED: Up to 8 to 10 years old.**

Adult seat-belts are designed for adult bodies over 145cm tall. Adult seat-belts alone do not provide adequate protection for children in this age group. An adult seat-belt will ride up onto a young child's soft abdominal area, especially when they slouch, putting them at risk of sustaining severe abdominal injuries in the event of a crash.

A booster seat will raise the child up to the correct level so that the adult seat-belt fits their smaller body correctly. The lap part of the seat-belt should be positioned low over the child's hips and thighs, **NOT** their soft belly. The sash part of the seat-belt should be positioned between their shoulder and neck across their collar bone, and **NOT** across their neck or face. Many booster seats are equipped with seat-belt sash guides, and slide guard clips or anti-submarining arm-rests and these should all be used to ensure correct fitment of the seat-belt on the child.

Booster seats also provide your child with important Side Impact Protection to their head and body in the event of a side impact collision. (Cushion boosters are no longer recommended due to lack of SIP).

Accessory H-Harness are no longer recommended due to the high risk of incorrect fitment. An incorrectly fitted H-Harness has the potential to cause severe injuries to a child, particularly when fitted too loose, allowing the lap part of the belt to ride up onto the soft abdominal area. They should only be used as a last resort when the only available seat-belt is a lap only. A booster seat used with a correctly fitted adult seat-belt is safer than an incorrectly fitted H-Harness.

Booster seats are for big kids. Encourage your kids to use them for as long as possible. In addition to the safety benefits, your child will have a better view out the side window, they will be more comfortable with the seat-belt in the correct position and they will have their own head-rest for sleeping on long trips.