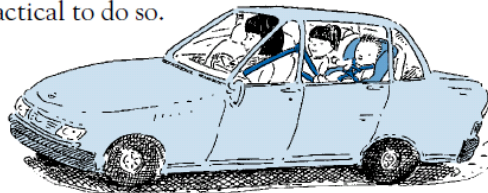


# Washington's Child Restraint Law

- Vehicle occupants of any age must be restrained properly. The driver is responsible for properly securing all passengers under age 16.
- Children under age 13 must ride in the back seat, whenever practical to do so.
- Children under age 8 or 4'9" tall must ride in an appropriate child restraint system (i.e. car seat or booster seat). Child restraint systems must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- When your child reaches age 8 or 4'9" tall – use the "Seat Belt Readiness Test" below to determine if they are ready to move to an adult seat belt.



CHILD'S AGE	TIPS FOR CHOOSING A SEAT	FEATURES TO LOOK FOR
<b>INFANT</b> (0-12 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infants must ride in a rear-facing car seat.</li> <li>• Infant seats are convenient for newborns and young babies – most have a base that installs in the vehicle, while the seat can be snapped in and out and used as an infant carrier.</li> <li>• Convertible seats are larger and remain installed in the vehicle. Most have higher weight and height limits than infant seats. Always install it in the rear-facing position for infants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-point harness with up front harness adjuster</li> <li>• Low harness slots (for newborns)</li> <li>• Multiple harness slots / crotch buckle positions (to adjust as baby grows)</li> </ul>
<b>TODDLER</b> (1-2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under age 2 are safest in a rear-facing car seat – choose a convertible seat with high rear-facing limits (30-35 lbs).</li> <li>• When your child reaches the rear-facing limits of their convertible seat – the next step is a forward-facing car seat.</li> <li>• A child should NOT ride forward-facing before reaching age 1 and 20 pounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-point harness</li> <li>• High rear-facing weight limit</li> <li>• Easy-to-use features – try installing seat and adjusting harness before you buy</li> </ul>
<b>PRESCHOOLER</b> (3-5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are safest in a 5-point harness.</li> <li>• If your child outgrows their car seat before age 4 / 40 pounds – consider moving to a seat whose harness system will accommodate their size.</li> <li>• The next step is a booster seat – always used with both a lap and shoulder seat belt.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-point harness</li> <li>• High forward-facing weight/height limit</li> <li>• High harness slots (for taller kids)</li> </ul>
<b>SCHOOL-AGE</b> (6+ years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your school-ager needs to use a child restraint system (car seat or booster) until the adult lap/shoulder belt can fit properly.</li> <li>• When your child reaches age 8 or 4'9" tall – use this "Seat Belt Readiness Test" to determine if they are ready to ride in an adult seat belt:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can your child sit comfortably against the vehicle's seat back?</li> <li>✓ Can your child's knees bend at the edge of the seat?</li> <li>✓ Does the lap belt fit low across the upper thighs?</li> <li>✓ Does the shoulder belt fit across the center of the shoulder and chest?</li> <li>✓ Can your child stay seated comfortably in this position for the entire ride?</li> </ul> <p><i>If the answer is "no" to any of these questions, your child should remain in a booster seat.</i></p> </li> <li>• Make sure your child always wears their seat belt correctly, and rides in the back seat until age 13.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-back boosters provide whiplash protection</li> <li>• Open shoulder belt guides for better fit</li> <li>• Wide / deep base for larger children</li> <li>• Kid-friendly designs (cool fabrics, cup holders, etc.)</li> </ul>

Questions about car seats, booster seats, or Washington's child restraint law?  
 Contact the Safety Restraint Coalition 1-800-BUCK-L-UP or [www.800BUCKLUP.org](http://www.800BUCKLUP.org)



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