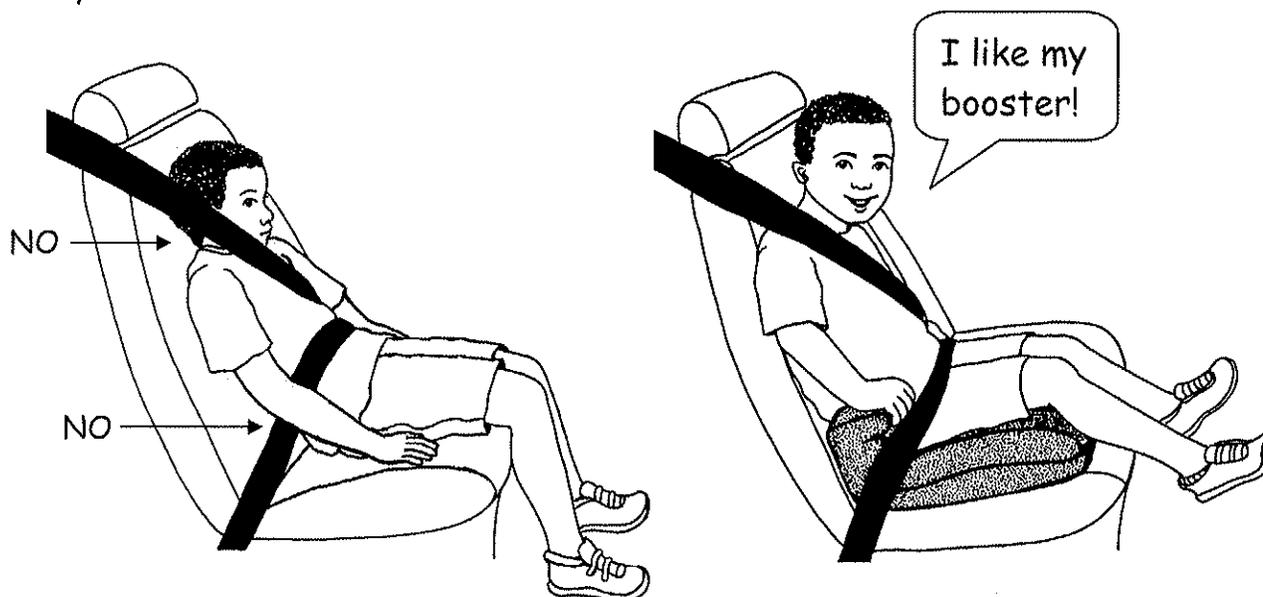


Boosters Are For Big Kids

Most kids need to ride in a booster seat from about age 4 until age 10-12.

If your child isn't using a booster, try the simple test below the next time you ride together in the car. You may find that your child is not yet ready to use a safety belt without a booster.



The 5-Step 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 make both the shoulder belt and the lap belt fit right for the best crash protection. Your child will be more comfortable, too!

For best protection, all children should ride in the back seat until they are ready to drive. It's twice as safe as the front seat.

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Does Your Child Need a Booster Seat?

Young children who are placed in vehicle belts rather than booster seats are twice as likely to suffer devastating injuries, including severe damage to the brain, liver, spleen, stomach, and spinal cord. Most children need to use a booster seat until age 10-12 for maximum protection and improved comfort in the car.

Q-My child is eight years old. Isn't she old enough to use a regular safety belt now?

A-No. Vehicle seats and belts are designed for adult bodies. For children who have outgrown a safety seat with a harness, a booster seat is needed to keep the lap belt on the upper thighs and the shoulder belt centered on the shoulder and chest.

Q-How can I tell when my child has outgrown his safety seat?*

A-Children should ride in a safety seat with a complete harness system as long as possible. Most current models fit up to 50 lbs. or more, but some fit only up to 40 lbs. Check the weight limit on the labels or in the instruction booklet and make sure the shoulders are at or below the top strap slots.

Q-What about children who outgrow their safety seats before age four?*

A-Most 2-year-olds and many 3-year-olds are too immature to sit still in a booster with a lap and shoulder belt, which allows them to lean forward or sideways. Parents should consider getting a larger seat or a harness system for younger or more active children who outgrow their safety seats.

Q-Why is it important for a child who has outgrown a regular safety seat to use a booster?

A-Older children have a higher rate of injury than younger ones for several reasons. Many of them place the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back. They tend to ride out of position, either sliding forward to the edge of the vehicle seat or slouching downward. Older children are less likely to be buckled up, perhaps because vehicle seats and belts are not comfortable for them.

Q-What about cars with only lap belts in the back seat?*

A-Never use a booster with only a lap belt! Although two shoulder belts have been required in vehicle back seats since 1989, many families have cars with lap-only belts in the center or older cars with no rear shoulder belts. With the wide variety of products with harnesses certified above 40 lbs. now available, there are excellent options for lap belt only locations.

Q-How can I tell when my child is big enough to use the vehicle belt without a booster?

A-It depends on the child's proportions, the shape of the vehicle seat, and where the belts are attached to the vehicle. The shoulder belt should cross the center of the shoulder and chest. The lap portion of the belt should be low and snug, crossing the hip bones or upper thighs. Check that your child's legs are long enough so the knees bend comfortably at the edge of the seat. Otherwise, the child will tend to slide forward to the edge of the seat or slouch downward, which can cause the lap belt to ride up too high. Make sure the child sits up straight, with the entire back touching the vehicle seatback, and stays properly seated **throughout the trip.**

***For information about safety seats to fit larger children:**

Go to www.carseat.org > Parents' Corner > Helpful Handouts or call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

(Over) Try the 5-Step Test to find out if your child needs a booster seat.

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What Is a Booster Seat?

A booster seat is a firm cushion of foam or plastic that raises the child higher in the car to improve the position and angle of the shoulder belt. (If there are no shoulder belts in the back seat of your car, skip to the bottom of the page.) There should be slots or hooks for the lap belt to keep it low, on the child's hips and thighs. There are backless, highback, and removable-back boosters. Most boosters include a shoulder belt guide or comfort clip that can be used, if necessary, to pull the shoulder belt slightly downward so it crosses the center of the shoulder and chest.

Choosing the best booster for your child

The ideal booster has an adjustable headrest and high-density, energy-absorbing foam in the head and chest areas. To protect the neck and spine, the child's head (up to the top of the ears) must be supported by the vehicle seatback, booster, or headrest. An adjustable headrest helps keep a sleeping child positioned properly under the vehicle belt and positions the shoulder belt comfortably without preventing it from retracting properly.

Backless boosters are lightweight and inexpensive, so they are a reasonable choice for carpooling, play dates, and public distribution programs. A backless booster should not be used unless the child is able to sit upright throughout the trip and the child's head is supported by the vehicle seatback. For family trips, a backless booster can be used in the car on the way to the airport and at the destination if it is packed in a carry-on bag. Boosters may not be used on aircraft.

Combination seats, which are often marketed as "highback boosters," usually have a harness that can be used up to 40 pounds or more, then removed to convert the seat to a booster (see cautions in next section).

How to tell if a booster fits

Try the booster with your child in your car(s). Make sure the lap belt is positioned low, touching the child's thighs and hips, and the shoulder belt crosses the middle of the child's shoulder, touching the chest.

Cautions: Some highback boosters and combination seats used as boosters have one or more of these problems:

(1) High sides that hold the lap belt above and away from the child, which may allow "submarining" (sliding downward and forward) in a crash. (2) Deep "wings" that hold the belt away from the child's shoulder, either too far forward or too far to the side. (3) For backless boosters, if the shoulder belt fits properly, it is not necessary to use the shoulder belt clip. If the clip is needed to keep the belt from scraping the neck or face, supervise the child closely, or select a different model.

When a booster should not be used

- If your car does not have shoulder belts in the back seat, a booster seat cannot be used. (Many cars made before 1990 have only lap belts in the back seat; cars made before 2006 may not have shoulder belts in the center.)
- If your child is too large for a typical safety seat with its own harness and is less than 4-5 years old or extremely active, he or she probably is not ready to sit still in a lap and shoulder belt with a booster. You need a larger seat or a travel vest to keep the child properly seated and secured (see below).

Large safety seats with a harness

For best protection, keep your child in a safety seat with a harness or a travel vest/harness as long as possible.

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List of Belt-Positioning Booster Seats

No internal harness. Must be used with vehicle lap and shoulder belts. The child should be at least 4-5 years old, preferably older, and must be able to stay seated with the belts properly positioned.

Highback Boosters with Adjustable Headrest

Recommended for best positioning of shoulder belt, to keep sleeping child placed properly in belt, and for head support in vehicles with low seatback, except as noted. Some have removable back.

Mfr.	Model Name	Child's Wt.	Features
Britax	Parkway SG, SGL, SG 2013, SGL 2013	40-120	May be used without backrest. SGL models include lower LATCH attachments. SG =SecureGuard for lap belt.
Chicco	KeyFit Strada	33-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Clek Inc.	Oobr	33-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.) Includes rigid LATCH attachments.
Combi	Kobuk Air Thru	33-125	May be used without backrest.
Diono	Monterey	30-120	May be used without backrest. Includes lower LATCH attachments.
Dorel	Boost Air Protect, Auto Booster, High Rider*, Protek*, Maxi-Cosi Rodi XR*, RodiFix*, Pronto*	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.) *Must be supported by vehicle seatback.
Evenflo	Amp, RightFit	30-110	May be used w/o backrest (40-110 lbs.)
Evenflo	Big Kid, Big Kid Sport	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Graco	Affix	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Graco	Highback TurboBooster	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Graco	Highback TurboBooster with Safety Surround	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Harmony	Baby Armor, Dreamtime, V6	30-110	May be used without backrest.
Kiddy US	CruiserFix Pro	33-100	Back is not removable.
Kiddy US	Kiddy World Plus	40-110	Back is not removable. Shield only for 22-40 lbs.
Recaro	ProBooster, Performance Booster	30-120	Back is not removable.
Recaro	Vivo	30-100	Back is not removable.
Team-Tex	Dreamway, Ferrari	33-100	May be used without backrest.
Tomy	Compass Folding Boosters	30-100	Folds up for storage and travel.

Other Highback Boosters

Back is not removable. No adjustable headrest. Do not use if shoulder belt is not touching child's shoulder and chest or if lap belt is not touching top of child's thighs. Caution: Some highback boosters have a belt guide that prevents the shoulder belt from retracting properly to take out the slack if child leans forward.

Manufacturer	Model Name	Child's Wt.	Features
Dorel	Complete Voyager	40-80	
Evenflo	Sightseer	30-100	
Gumotex	GoBooster	40-80	Inflatable booster.
Harmony	Folding Travel Booster	30-110	

Backless Boosters Acceptable if child's head is supported by vehicle seatback. May have belt adjuster clip/strap.

Manufacturer	Model Name	Child's Wt.	Features
BubbleBum USA	BubbleBum Booster	40-100	Inflatable booster.
Clek Inc.	Olli, Ozzi	40-120	Includes rigid LATCH attachments.
Combi	Dakota	33-100	
Diono	Santa Fe	30-120	Includes rigid LATCH attachments.
Dorel	Top Side, Stack It! BoostAPak	40-100	BoostAPak converts to back pack
Dorel	Highrise, Ambassador	30-100	
Evenflo	Amp, Amp Sport No-Back	40-110	
Evenflo	Big Kid No-Back	40-110	Also available with backrest.
Graco	Backless TurboBooster	40-100	Also available with backrest.
Graco	Connex	40-100	
Harmony	Cruz, Olympian, Transit	30-110	
Harmony	Youth Booster	30-100	
Team-Tex	HighRide, Ola, Ferrari	33-100	

Note: Integrated or add-on child restraints are available from some vehicle dealers.

Try the 5-Step Test Today!

Note: This exercise is for children up to age 10-12 who have outgrown a regular safety seat with a harness. It shows how boosters can improve belt fit and comfort in the car.

(Please print)

Name of child _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Weight _____ Height _____ Child's home city _____ Zip _____

Have the child get ready for a "pretend" ride by sitting in the car and buckling up with the lap and shoulder belt in the back seat. Answer the following the questions:

1. Is the child sitting tall so his/her whole back is touching the seatback? Yes No
(If no, please ask the child to move all the way back before continuing.)
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the seat? Yes No
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm? Yes No
4. Is the lap belt touching the tops of the legs? Yes No
5. Can the child sit like this for the whole trip? Yes No

If the answer to any of these questions is "no," the child needs a booster seat to ride safely in the car. Note: A safety seat with a harness designed for larger children or tethered harness system is needed if (a) there are no shoulder belts in the back seat of the car OR (b) if the child is very active OR (c) the child is under age 3-4.

How does this child ride in the car? (Check all that apply) Front seat Back seat
 Safety seat with harness Booster Lap and shoulder belt Lap-only belt

Make/model of the car child rides in _____ Year _____

Was a sample booster tried? Yes No

Improvements with booster: Position of Knees Shoulder belt Lap belt

Do you plan to get a booster for this child? Yes No

Staff notes: _____

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