

Child's age range

Legal requirements

Our recommendation

Birth to 6 months



Infants up to 6 months old must use an approved rearward-facing child restraint (this means a dedicated infant restraint or rearward-facing safety seat).

They mustn't travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats.

We recommend using a dedicated infant restraint that's specifically designed for small babies.

These types of restraints tend to take up less room than convertible baby seats, and also allow for the bassinet section to be removed from the base in the vehicle.

Look for a restraint that provides a good harness fit for your baby, and check that the restraint fits in your vehicle correctly before you buy.

6 months to 4 years



Children from 6 months and up to 4 years old must be restrained in either an approved rearward-facing restraint or a forward-facing child safety seat (this means a seat with an inbuilt harness).

They mustn't travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats.

Convertible car seats need to be fitted rearward-facing until the child's shoulder meets the shoulder height marker, at which time they can be turned forward-facing

Look for a seat that allows your child to remain rearward-facing until they're at least 12 months old, as this is the safest option (**read our 'Rear vs Forward Facing' fact sheet for more information**).

Rearward-facing restraints can take up a lot of room, particularly if they have a moveable headrest, so make sure the restraint fits in your vehicle with the headrest extended before you buy.

There are now extended harness seats, which allow a child to remain in an inbuilt harness until they move into a seatbelt. But these are only suitable for children that meet the forward-facing requirements (the child's shoulder must meet the shoulder height marker).

4 years to 7 years



Children from 4 years and up to 7 years old must be restrained in an approved forward-facing child safety seat (this means a seat with an inbuilt harness), or an approved booster seat restrained by a correctly adjusted seatbelt or child safety harness.

They mustn't travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats, unless all of the other rear seats are being used by children under seven years old.

Look for a booster seat that's tall, and preferably one with a headrest that can be adjusted as the child grows. Make sure the design of the booster seat provides a good seatbelt fit.

When using multiple restraints, it's important to check that the design of the booster allows access to the vehicle's seatbelt buckle.

You'll need an external harness if the booster is going to be used in a position that's only fitted with a lap belt. Or, an extended harness seat could be used in this position.

7 years to 16 years



Children from 7 years and up to 16 years old must be restrained in an approved child restraint (a child safety seat or booster seat, depending on their size), or a properly adjusted and correctly fastened adult seatbelt.

Children shouldn't move out of their booster or car seat until they've outgrown it.

If a child has outgrown their booster or extended harness seat and they still can't wear the seatbelt properly (like an adult, with the sash part on the shoulder and lap part low down on hips) then a taller seat may be available.

It's important to know that children usually don't fit adult seatbelts properly in most cars until they're at least 145cm tall.

A properly adjusted seatbelt is where the sash part sits on the shoulder, and the lap part sits low across the hips or upper thighs (**read our 'What happens after 7?' fact sheet for more information**).

We're here to help

For more information, give our Child Safety Centre a call on **8202 4592** or email us at **childrestraints@raa.com.au**

It's important to know that you should only move a child up to the next stage when they've outgrown their current restraint. If the child is too large for the nominated type of restraint, they can move then, and only then, to the next type of restraint.