

New child restraint laws

Effective
11 March 2010

The major cause of child death and injury in car accidents is that the child is not in the proper restraint or wearing a seat belt. Research has shown that in many cases, a proper child restraint was in the car but not used. By law, every child must use a suitable restraint in a car, even when only travelling a short distance.

Birth to 6 months

Babies must travel facing toward the back of the vehicle in a capsule or a rear-facing convertible car seat until they are at least 6 months of age **and** weigh 8kg. The baby **must be both** 6 months or older and 8kg or more.

6 months to 4 years

At 6 months the baby may face forward provided they have also reached a minimum of 8kg body weight and have good, steady, full head control. Children without good head control can stay facing toward the rear until they are 9kg to 12kg, depending on the weight guidelines for the restraint used. The weight of the child is important because all forward-facing restraints are tested from 8kg and,

What does it mean for you and your child?

some rear-facing restraints are tested up to 12kg.

Once facing forward, children should remain in this type of child seat — anchored by a tether strap and the car seat belt with an in-built harness — until they are 4 years of age. If the child is not 4 but has exceeded the maximum limitations of the seat (under current Australian Standards a body weight of 18kg) **or**, when sitting on the child seat, the highest harness shoulder position is more than 2.5 cm below the child's shoulder, **or**, when sitting on the child seat, the child's eyes are level with or above the back of the child seat, then the child can graduate into a booster seat.

So, children should only graduate into a booster seat when they have exceeded the height / weight limitations of the child toddler seat. For example, if your 3-year-old weighs more than 18kg they can move into a booster, **or** if your child is at least 4 years old and has reached the MINIMUM requirements for using a booster

seat (14kg in weight) they can graduate into a booster seat.

While 14kg is around the average weight of a 2 year old, booster seats ARE NOT designed for children this young. A 2-year-old weighing 14kg will likely be a shorter, 'squatter' package than a slim 4-year-old weighing similar. Also, 2-year-olds are not mentally ready for booster seats as they do not have the level of comprehension for instructions on the wearing of seat belts.

4 years to 7 years

All children are required to be restrained in a booster seat until they turn 7 years of age. A child must be in a booster seat until they turn 7 **unless** their weight exceeds 26kg (currently the maximum weight to which all boosters are tested in Australia) **or** their eye level is higher than the back of the restraint or the vehicle's headrest. If the vehicle is not fitted with a headrest then a half booster is probably not suitable as the child's head is not adequately protected.

A guide to child restraints

Indicative ages and weights

| 0–6 months | 6 months–1 year | 6 months–4 years | 4–7 years |
|---|--|--|--|
| Less than 8 kgs | 8–12 kgs | 8–18 kgs | 14–26 kgs |
| Rearward facing baby capsule or infant restraint  | Rearward or forward facing infant restraint  | Forward facing child restraint with built-in harness  | Booster seat with H-harness* or booster seat with a secured adult seatbelt   |

*Note: An H-harness can continue to be used with or without a booster seat for a child up to 32 kgs.

Penalty for incorrectly securing a child: \$300 and 3 demerit points.

For more information go to www.transport.qld.gov.au/childrestraints, call 13 23 80 or call Kidsafe on (07) 3854 1829

Kidsafe Day 2009

In celebration of 30 years of making a safer world for kids, Kidsafe Queensland presented Dr J Fred Leditschke AM an award to recognize his *Lifetime Contribution to Child Safety*.

Dr Leditschke is devoted to trauma prevention and has made significant contributions to Kidsafe particularly through his long association with the Kidsafe Queensland Board and as the first President of the restructured federated Kidsafe. Among other achievements, he was a military surgeon (rank of Major), the Foundation Paediatric Surgeon appointed to University of Queensland in 1967, past president of Australian New Zealand Burns Association, District Surgeon St John Ambulance Australia and subsequently Commissioner. Currently Dr Fred is Consultant Surgeon to the Burns Unit at Royal Children's Hospital.

A *Kidsafe Champion Award* was presented to Bob and Adrian Stevenson of Peerless Drycleaning for 23 years of supporting the Kidsafe capsule hire scheme.



Visit us at Kidsafe House

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Kidsafe Qld is a not-for-profit charitable organisation dedicated to the prevention of unintentional childhood injuries. Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible. Phone (07) 3854 1829 to make your donation by credit card or send a cheque to the address above. Your help can make a difference to children's lives.

Six tips to help keep kids safe at home

With three out of four serious injuries to young children occurring in the place you would think they would be the safest — their own home. It's time to check your home against the following list of **home safety features**:

Pools (and spas) that are fully fenced with well-maintained, self-closing gates.

Why? Young children drown quickly and silently. Around 20 children under five drown each year in Australia in unfenced pools or pools with poorly maintained fences or gates.

Hot water from bathroom taps set at a delivery temperature of 50 degrees.

Why? Hot water burns like fire. Many Australian homes have hot water coming from their taps at temperatures that can burn a child's skin in one second.

Barriers such as gates on stairs and fireguards in place to keep children away from hazards.

Why? Falls down stairs and steps are common and because young children are 'top heavy', head injuries can often occur. Babies and toddlers don't understand 'hot'. They are attracted to bright colours—like the flames of a fire—and may touch hot surfaces while simply exploring their world.

Child restraint catches fitted to cupboards where dangers like medicines, cleaners, matches and lighters are stored.

Why? Young children are curious and don't understand danger. Telling them 'not to touch' is not enough to keep them safe. Dangerous products need to be stored away safely.

Install **smoke alarms**, test them regularly and change the battery

once a year.

Why? House fires continue to claim Australian lives every year. Young children are at risk as they need adults to rescue them in time. Smoke alarms provide a warning that may be critical to survival.

Play areas fenced off from the street and the driveway.

Why? Cars and kids don't mix. Young children have no fear of cars and are not easily seen by drivers. Nearly every month a toddler is killed after being reversed over in a driveway.

Kidsafe estimates that if these six features were in place in all Australian homes, they would help prevent more than half of all home injury deaths among children under five and thousands of children from the trauma of a hospital visit. ##