

FACT SHEET:

A Guide to Child Car Restraint Use



The Queensland Road Rules:

- ◆ Newborns and infants up to 6 months must travel rearward facing.
- ◆ Toddlers must travel either rearward or forward facing with a built-in harness.
- ◆ After the age of 4 years, kids travel either in a forward facing restraint with a built-in harness or in a booster seat with an adult seatbelt or a booster seat with an additional H-Harness properly fitted.
- ◆ After the age of 7 years a child may travel on the adult seat using the adult seatbelt.

From birth to 7 years children must be seated in a child car restraint that meets the Australian Standard AS/NZS1754.

The vast majority of Australian Standard child car restraints being used and all of the new restraint being sold have height markers. (See attached Guide to Child Car Restraints.) These height markers depict when a baby can turn forward facing and sit forward facing in a Type G restraint (which is a large dedicated forward facing restraint for children up to approximately 8 years of age). These height markers also depict when a child is tall enough to sit in a booster seat.

The height markers also clearly show when the child is too tall for the seat—when they have outgrown it—with the marker stating “shoulders must be below this line”.

Therefore the Queensland Road Rules are a guide to when a baby or child *may* turn forward facing or sit in a booster—the Australian Standard Child Car Restraint dictates *when* a baby or child is tall enough or too tall for the restraint in question.

All child restrains and booster seats must be installed correctly and the child strapped in correctly according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure all passengers are in the correct child car seat for their age and size.

Best Practice:

Infants are safest in a rear-facing restraint so leave them in their rear-facing restraint as long as they still fit (check height markers). Once the toddler is too tall for its rear-facing restraint they should use a forward facing restraint until they are too tall for it (check height marker).

Once a child is too tall for a forward facing restraint they should use a booster seat with a lap-sash seatbelt or an additional H Harness properly fitted. While the law allows a child of 7 years to use either a booster seat or sit on the adult seat, a booster seat offers better protection—as long as the child is not too tall for it (check upper height marker).

If the child turns seven but has not yet reached the maximum height marker in the harnessed seat or in the booster seat they should stay in the seat until they have outgrown it. Note that there are booster seats tall enough for a child up to the average age of 10 years.

It is best that children graduate out of their smaller boosters and built-in harnessed seats into a tall booster like the Kid Guard. The added safety benefit is that this seat gives side impact protection, has an anti-slide device (which comes up between their legs to keep the lap part of the adult seat belt on their hips) and has a guide to keep the sash belt on their shoulder.

Children 12 years of age and under are safest in the rear seat. *The front seat is not a treat!*

Follow the five-step test to check if a child over 7 years is safe to sit on the adult seat using the adult seatbelt. (See attached Child Restraint Guidelines).

- ◆ Can the child sit with their back against the vehicle seat back?
- ◆ Do the child’s knees bend in front of the edge of the seat?
- ◆ Does the sash belt sit across the middle of the shoulder?
- ◆ Is the lap belt sitting low across the hips touching the thighs?
- ◆ Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?