

Child restraints, booster seats and seatbelt readiness



It is the law that all children under 16 years of age, when travelling in a motor vehicle in Victoria, must be seated in a suitable restraint that is properly adjusted and fastened.

The type of restraint will depend on the child's age and size.

Child restraints and booster seats used in Victoria must comply with the Australian/New Zealand Standard 1754.



Children from birth

By law, a child aged under 6 months must travel in a rear facing child restraint.

Rear facing restraints provide the head and neck support that babies and young children need to keep them safe in a crash.

Important safety features

All rear facing child restraints must be held in place by the seatbelt **OR** ISOFIX attachments **AND** the top tether strap, and **MUST** have an inbuilt harness.

When to move from a rear facing restraint

Every child is unique and grows at different rates. It is safest for children to stay in a rear facing child restraint until they outgrow it.

Some rear facing restraints can be turned around and used forward facing when the child is big enough, while others allow children to stay rear facing until about 2–3 years old.



Rear facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness

Children aged 6 months to under 4 years

A child aged 6 months to under 4 years must travel in either a rear facing or forward facing child restraint.

The type of restraint will depend on the child's size. It is safest to keep your child in a rear facing restraint until they outgrow it.

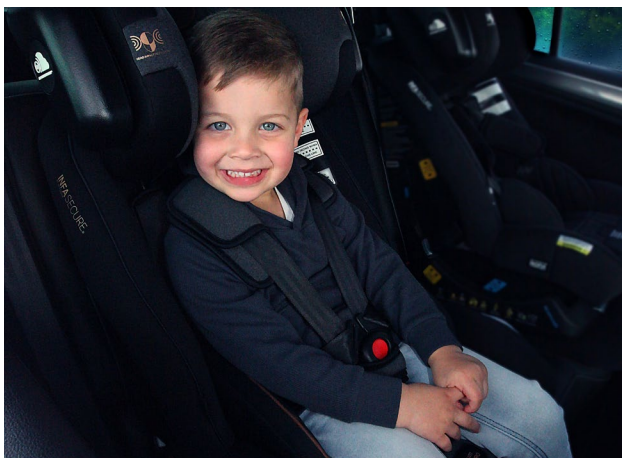
Important safety features

All rear and forward facing child restraints **MUST** be held in place by the seatbelt **OR** ISOFIX attachments **AND** the top tether strap, and **MUST** have an inbuilt harness.

When to move from a forward facing child restraint

Only move your child to a booster seat when they have outgrown their forward facing restraint.

Some forward facing restraints now have an inbuilt harness for children up to about 8 years old – these are called Type G restraints.



Convertible child car restraint in forward facing mode

Children aged 4 years to under 7 years

A child aged 4 years to under 7 years must travel in either a forward facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness, or a booster seat.

The type of restraint will depend on the child's size.

Important safety features

All forward facing child restraints must be held in place by the seatbelt **OR** ISOFIX attachments **AND** the top tether strap, and **MUST** have an inbuilt harness.

A booster seat can be used with a lap-sash seatbelt. It may have a top tether strap. If it does, always use the top tether strap.

When to move to a booster seat

Only move your child to a booster seat when they have outgrown their forward facing restraint.

Some forward facing restraints can be converted to a booster seat by removing the inbuilt harness. This is called a combination restraint.



Type G harnessed child restraint

Children aged 7 years to under 16 years

A child aged 7 years to under 16 years must travel in either a forward facing child restraint, a booster seat or an adult seatbelt.

An adult lap-sash seatbelt is designed for people with a minimum height of 145 cm. The average child will reach this height between 10 and 12 years of age.

A child should continue using a forward facing child restraint or booster seat until they have outgrown it.

When to move to an adult seatbelt - The 5-step test

To achieve a good seatbelt fit your child must pass all five steps:

1. Sit with their back flat against the back of the seat.
2. Sit with their knees bent comfortably over the seat edge.
3. The seatbelt sits low and firm across the child's hips and touches their thighs.
4. The seatbelt sits over the middle of their shoulder and does not dig into their neck.
5. They can sit comfortably in this position for the whole trip.

If your child cannot pass all five steps, keep them in a booster seat or forward facing restraint.



Adult lap sash seatbelt

Make the safest choice

Visit childcarseats.com.au to choose the safest restraint for your child.

This website tests and rates child restraints and booster seats according to how well they protect your child in a crash, and how easy they are to use.



Rear facing child car restraint with top tether strap

Front and back seats

- The **back seat is the safest place** for children.
- **Under 4 years:** Must not sit in the front seat (if the car has 2 or more rows).
- **Ages 4–6:** May sit in the front *only if all back seats are occupied by children under 7*, and they use a booster seat that is made without a top tether strap.
- **7 years and over:** Can sit in the front, but the back seat is still safer.

Children aged 12 and under are almost **twice as likely to be injured** in the front seat compared to the back.

If your vehicle has only one row of seats (e.g. ute or van)

- Children can sit in the front if they use the **correct restraint for their size**.
- **Do not use a rear facing seat** in the front if there is a passenger airbag.
- For forward facing seats or booster seats, **move the vehicle seat as far back as possible** from the airbag.

Airbags are designed for adults and can injure children.



Children with disabilities and medical conditions

There are exemptions from the child restraint road rules for children with a disability or medical condition.

To receive an exemption, certain conditions must be met, including having a medical certificate.

A health professional, such as an occupational therapist, can assess your child's transport needs and provide advice.

For more information visit macahub.org



Image supplied by MACA

The Australian and New Zealand Standard: AS/NZS 1754

All child car restraints sold and used in Australia must meet AS/NZS 1754. It's illegal to use a child car restraint or booster seat that doesn't meet this standard.

Check the standards sticker on the restraint and restraint packaging to confirm that the restraint complies with AS/NZS 1754.



ISOFIX child restraints

ISOFIX is a way to attach a child restraint to a vehicle without using a seatbelt.

Both the car and the restraint must have ISOFIX attachments.

Check your vehicle manual to see if your car has ISOFIX anchorage points.

Always install and use restraints carefully – incorrect use can happen when installing any type of restraint or when buckling children into their seat.

Choosing the right size

To protect your child in a crash the restraint must be the right size for your child.

All Australian standards approved child car restraints and booster seats have shoulder height markers. Use these markers to check if the car restraint is the right size for your child.

Keep your child in their current seat as long as they fit within the markers.

The road rules allow a child, who is too tall for the recommendation for their age, to use a restraint in the next age category.

For more information:

RACV

racv.com.au

Tel: 13 72 28

Kidsafe Victoria

kidsafevic.com.au

Tel: (03) 9036 2306

TAC

howsafeisyourcar.com.au

Starting Out Safely

childroadsafety.org.au

MACA

macahub.org



Find out more.
Scan or visit
transport.vic.gov.au