

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 and the lap 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 arms 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 or must be used 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, to be guaranteed its arrival at the destination, pack it 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 from 40 to 90 pounds, 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 older models of 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 a shoulder belt 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.

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. P.O. Box 553, Altadena, CA 91003 www.carseat.org
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List of Belt-Positioning Booster Seats

No internal harness. Must be used with vehicle lap and shoulder belts. Child should be at least 4 years old, but SafetyBeltSafe recommends age 6 or more, and 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
Aidia Baby	Pathfinder	30-100	Back is not removable
Aidia Baby	Explorer	30-110	May be used w/o backrest (40-110 lbs.)
Baby Trend	PROtect Yumi Booster	30-100	Back is not removable
Baby Trend	PROtect Yumi 2-in-1	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Chicco	KidFit	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-110 lbs.)
Clek Inc.	Oobr	33-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.) Includes rigid LATCH connectors.
Combi	Kobuk Air Thru	33-125	May be used without backrest.
Diono	Cambria, Monterey XT	40-120	May be used without backrest. Includes lower LATCH connectors.
Dorel	Boost Air Protect, Deluxe BPB, High Rider*, Pronto*, Protek*, RodiFix*	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.) *Must be supported by vehicle seatback.
Dorel	Store 'N Go	40-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Dream On Me	Deluxe High Back Booster	30-110	May be used without backrest (30-100 lbs.)
Goodbaby	Evenflo Amp, RightFit	30-110	May be used w/o backrest (40-110 lbs.)
Goodbaby	Evenflo Big Kid, Big Kid Sport	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Goodbaby	Evenflo Spectrum	40-110	May be used w/o backrest (40-110 lbs.)
Graco	Affix	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Graco	TurboBooster	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Graco	TurboBooster with Safety Surround	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Graco	TurboBooster LX	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-110 lbs.)
Harmony	Big Boost Deluxe	30-110	Back is not removable
Harmony	Dreamtime, Dreamtime 2, Folding Travel Booster*	30-110	May be used without backrest. * Back is not removable.
Jane	Montecarlo R1	30-100	Back is not removable.
Kiddy USA	Cruiser 3	33-120	Back is not removable.
Kids Embrace	Fun Ride Highback Booster	30-100	May be used w/o backrest (40-100 lbs.)
Lil Fan	Club Seat	30-110	May be used without backrest (40-110 lbs.)
Little Tikes	Booster Seat, Hip	40-120	May be used without backrest (40-120 lbs.)
Nuna	Aace	40-110	May be used without backrest (50-120 lbs.)
Peg Perego	Viaggio Flex 120	40-120	Back is not removable

Peg Perego	Viaggio Highback Booster	40-120	May be used without backrest.
Recaro	ProBooster, Performance Booster	30-120	Back is not removable.
Team-Tex	Ferrari Dreamway	33-100	May be used without backrest.

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.

Manufacturer	Model Name	Child's Wt.	Features
Goodbaby	Cybox Solution M Fix	40-110	Rigid LATCH, Linear side-impact protection
Goodbaby	Cybox Solution Q2 Fix	33-110	Rigid LATCH, Linear side-impact protection
Goodbaby	Evenflo Chase No Harness	40-110	

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
Aidia Baby	Scout	40-110	
BubbleBum USA	BubbleBum Booster	40-100	Inflatable booster.
Carfoldio	Mifold	40-100	
Chicco	GoFit	40-110	
Clek Inc.	Olli, Ozzi	40-120	Includes rigid LATCH connectors.
Combi	Dakota	33-100	Includes rigid LATCH connectors.
Diono	Solana	40-120	Includes rigid LATCH connectors.
Dorel	Ambassador, BoostAPak, Highrise, Top Side, Stack It!	40-100	BoostAPak converts to back pack.
Dorel	Incognito	60-120	No shoulder belt guide.
Dream On Me	Coupe	30-100	
Evenflo	Amp, Amp Sport No-Back	40-110	
Harmony	Transit, Transit w/LATCH	30-110	
Harmony	Lite Rider, Youth Booster	30-100	
Kids Embrace	Toddler Booster Car Seat	40-100	
Lil Fan	Box Seat	40-110	
Safe Traffic System	Delighter	40-100	May be used with Ride Safer Travel Vests

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

Most kids need to ride in a booster seat until age 10-12. If your child isn't using a booster, try the simple test on the following page the next time you ride together in the car. Your child may not yet ready to use a safety belt only.

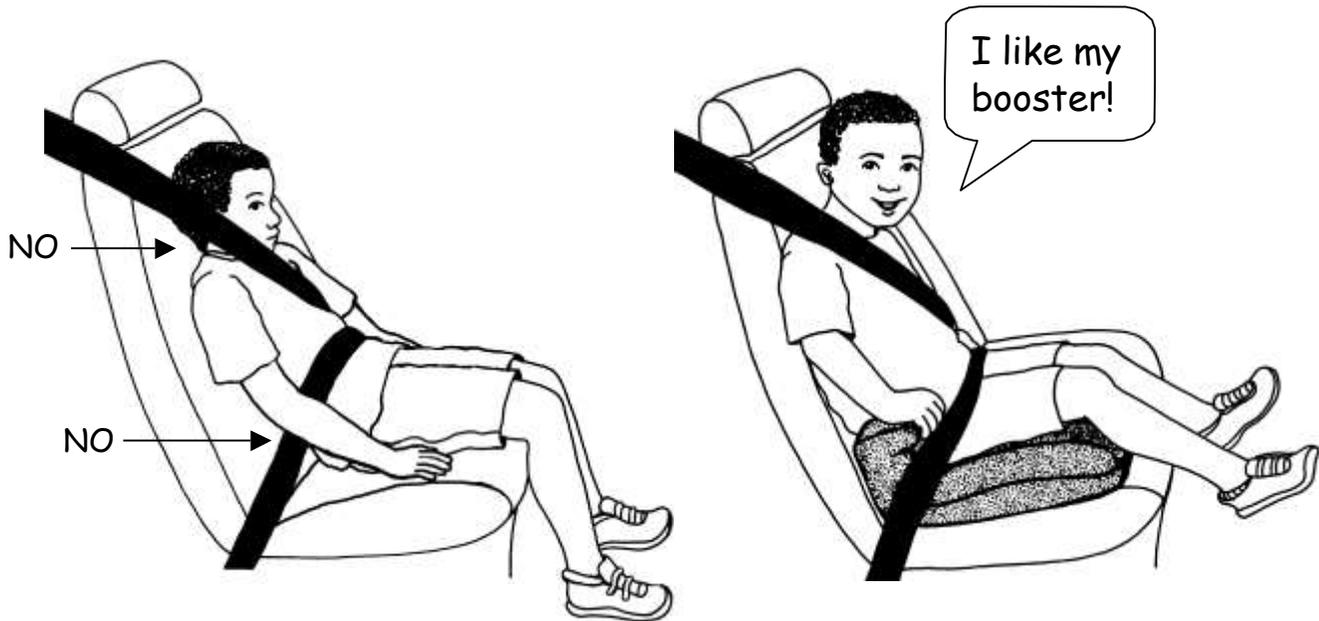
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Boosters Are for Big Kids

Most kids need to ride in a booster seat from about age 6 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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