

Riding in booster seats and seat belts

After kids complete the forward-facing stage, riding in a booster seat is an important step before they are ready to sit using a seat belt only.



Using booster seats correctly:

- Always follow the age, weight, and height guidelines for the booster seat.
- Always use the booster seat in the back seat of the car with a lap and shoulder belt.
- Always check the booster seat and vehicle owner's manual for the correct way to install and use.
- Never use a lap-only seat belt with a booster seat.
- Even when the seat is not in use, it should always be belted in.
- Your child should be able to sit up for the entire trip to make sure the booster and seat belts are protecting them correctly.
- The shoulder belt should never be put behind the child's back or under their arm.

What comes next?

A child can ride safely without a booster seat once they have passed the five-point test:

- They can sit with their back flat against the vehicle seat.
- Their knees bend at the edge of the seat.
- The lap belt sits comfortably on top of the thighs, not the belly.
- The shoulder belt rests between the neck and shoulder.
- The child can sit properly with no slouching and without playing with the seat belt.

Most kids are 10-12 years old before they pass this five-step test. If you answer no to any of the above steps, your child should stay in a booster seat. Since cars and seat belts are different, your child may be ready to ride in a seat belt in some cars, but they may need a booster in others.