

HOW BOOSTER SEATS WORK

IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR A SEAT BELT? THINK AGAIN! Children need to ride in a booster seat until the seat belt fits right, when they are at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall, about 80 pounds, and 8-12 years old.

WHAT IS A BOOSTER SEAT?

A booster seat is made for older kids when they are TOO BIG FOR A CAR SEAT BUT NOT BIG ENOUGH FOR AN ADULT SEAT BELT. A booster seat raises the child up so that both the lap and shoulder parts of the seat belt pass across the child's body in the right places.

WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED TO RIDE IN A BOOSTER SEAT?

Car crashes kill more children 4 to 8 years old than anything else. Seat belts save lives, but a seat belt that doesn't fit correctly won't protect your child in a crash. **Booster seats solve the problem.**

In a crash, a child who is too small for a seat belt can slip out and get injured or die. Children also can be badly hurt in a crash when the lap part of the seat belt sits up on the tummy, where it can injure internal organs. A shoulder belt worn under the arm can break ribs, and placing the shoulder belt behind the back causes the child to move too far forward causing head trauma.



Alaska is the 49th state to enact a booster seat law. As of September 15, 2009 the Alaska law requires booster seats (or high weight limit car seats) for children from 4 years of age until their 8th birthday. Children of that age group who weigh more than 65 pounds or are over 4 feet 9 inches could legally be transitioned to a shoulder lap belt. At eight years old it is legally up to the driver to determine the appropriate restraint for the child.

Doctors and safety experts advise that children use booster seats until the seat belt fits correctly. In many cases this will be when they are at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall, about 80 pounds, and 8-12 years old.

WHEN DOES MY CHILD NEED TO USE A BOOSTER SEAT?

Start to use a booster seat when your child:

- Outgrows his/her forward-facing car seat with a harness. This happens when his/her shoulders are above the top set of strap slots or;
- Weighs 40 pounds.

Keep using a booster seat until the seat belt fits the way it should.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN THE SEAT BELT FITS MY CHILD?

To see if your child is ready for a seat belt, try this 5-step test*:

1. Can you child set all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do your child's knees bend with ease the edge of the seat without slouching?
3. Does the lap belt fit snugly across the tip of the thighs, not up on the tummy?
4. Does the shoulder belt come across the center of the shoulder and chest?
5. Can your child sit like this for the whole trip?

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, or your child puts the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back, a booster seat is needed for a good seat belt fit.

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"BOOSTER UP" ALASKA – It's the Law

