

Family Safety and Legal Tips

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Using Booster Seats — An Important Decision for Parents

Knowing When to Use Them Could Save Your Child's Life!

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), car accidents are the leading cause of death for children 14 and under. Failure to use proper restraints is a contributing factor in half of these fatalities. This guide will help you determine when children should use a booster seat and when they are ready to use seat belts alone.

Various studies have proven that children under the age of 12 are often not ready to wear seat belts alone, and that booster seats are needed— **much longer than most parents realize**—to bridge the gap between forward-facing safety seats and vehicle safety belts.

When Should Parents Use Child Booster Seats?

Booster seats lift children so that seat belts are positioned properly—giving greater protection and helping to reduce injuries in the event of a crash. According to the NHTSA, once children outgrow their forward-facing seats (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly (minimum of 4'9" and 8-12 years of age).

Is Your Child Ready for Seat Belts? When children outgrow their booster seats, you still need to confirm that it is safe to use only a safety belt. The consequences of prematurely moving to seat belts alone can be disastrous, so we urge parents to review and adhere to the following guidelines — and to encourage other parents to

do the same! To determine if your child is ready to ride without a booster, you need to be certain that the seat belt fits properly, that your child can sit comfortably in the rear seat for the duration of the ride, and that:

1. The child's knees bend comfortably over the seat's edge while the child's back rests firmly against the seat back;
2. The lap belt lays low across the child's thighs — NEVER across the stomach area;
3. The shoulder belt rests across the shoulder, NEVER across the child's neck.

Remember, NEVER let a child less than 4 '9" ride without a booster seat, and NEVER graduate a child to seat belts only until you confirm that the seat belts fit properly!

Sources: NHTSA, CDC

This is just a short summary of what you should know about child passenger safety! Please visit Montlick.com or HelpKeepKidsSafe.org and click on: **Family Safety & Legal Tips** to see our latest safety videos and downloadable materials, and to register for your Free Safety Alerts.



1. Rear-Facing Seats



2. Forward-Facing Seats



3. Booster Seats



4. Seat Belts