



Child Car Restraints

In Western Australia, the leading cause of death for children aged zero to 14 years is transport related injury. Motor vehicle accidents are one of the most common causes of transport related injury for children. Whenever children are passengers in a vehicle they should be seated in the most appropriate child car restraint for their age and size. A correctly fitted and used child car restraint can significantly reduce the risk of serious injury or death in road crashes.

Australian Standards AS/NZS:1754

All child car restraints sold and used in Australia must meet the strict requirements of the joint Australian New Zealand Standards AS/NZS:1754. Restraints purchased in other countries do not meet the Australian Standard - it is illegal to use them in Australia.

Choosing a Child Car Restraint

When choosing a child car restraint you need to ensure the restraint suits your child, car and individual needs.

There are a number of different types of child car restraints on the market designed to cater for a child's age and size. Packaging on the restraints will provide the approximate age range of the restraint, however it is important to consider the child's size and how they fit in the restraint.

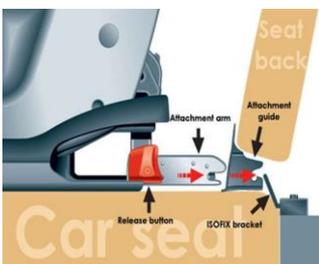
Restraints can have a single use - such as infant carriers which are only used rearward facing for babies up to approximately 6 or 12 months. Other restraints will have multiple uses and take a child through a number of stages. For example convertible restraints can be used in a rearward facing or forward facing position for a child from birth to approximately 4 years of age.



Second Hand Child Car Restraints

Before using a second hand child car restraint make sure to look out for the following things:

1. Labeling confirming the restraint complies with AS/NZS 1754.
2. Instruction booklet and the complete set of parts.
3. Check the history of the restraint – make sure it has not been in a car accident. If a restraint has been involved in a severe crash it should be destroyed. Some car insurers may assist with the replacement of a restraint in the event of an accident.
4. Check the date of manufacture on the restraint. Do not use restraints older than ten years as it cannot be guaranteed to perform as originally intended. Australian Standards are regularly reviewed so older restraints will not meet new improved design features.
5. Do not use the restraint if there are a lot of stress lines, splits, cracks or broken areas. Stress marks appear like white lines (the same lines you get if you twist a plastic milk bottle).
6. Check harnessing and tethering for small frays or tears. A tear or fray as small as 5 mm is a weak point in the harnessing.
7. Check tethering for mould. Little black spots indicate mould is rotting the webbing at these points.



ISOFIX compatible restraints were introduced into the Australian Standard in 2013 for some restraint types.

The top tether strap must still be used on ISOFIX compatible restraints.



When selecting a child car restraint it is important to consider the age and size of the child using the restraint. Restraints are manufactured to accommodate specific height (or weight) ranges, and the law references a child's age. It is also important to use the child car restraint to its maximum size limits. Do not move to the next stage just because the child has reached the specified age.

Birth to at least 6 months

Must use an approved rearward facing child car restraint with a built-in five point harness.

Children must stay in the rearward facing position until:

- At least 6 months of age
- Has outgrown the height marker on the restraint



At least 6 months to 4 years

Can use either a rearward facing or forward facing child car restraint with a built-in five point harness. Children which have outgrown the rearward facing child car restraint must use a forward facing restraint with a built-in five point harness until:

- At least 4 years of age
- Has outgrown the height marker on the restraint



At least 4 to 7 years

Can use either a forward facing child car restraint with a built-in five point harness or a booster seat with an adult seatbelt. Children which have outgrown the forward facing child car restraint with a built-in harness may use a booster seat until:

- At least 7 years of age
- Has outgrown the height marker on the restraint



Over 7 years

If your child still fits in a child car restraint or booster seat, continue to use it until they outgrow it. When deciding whether your child is ready to sit on the vehicle seat do the "Five step test" (see the "Child Restraint Guidelines" publication on the Kidsafe Australia website).

Where should my child ride?

Kidsafe WA and other road safety experts recommend the rear centre seating position as the preferred position for children. This provides some additional protection from a side impact collision.

When the rear centre seating position is not able to be used, the rear left passenger is the next most suitable option as this is usually the off-road/footpath side of the car.

Research demonstrates that front seat passengers are at significantly greater risk of severe injury and/or death in the event of an accident. Legally children under 7 years of age are not permitted to occupy the front passenger seat of any vehicle with two or more rows of seats. Children aged 4 to 7 years can only occupy the front passenger seat of a vehicle with two or more rows of seats if all the rear seating positions are occupied by other children less than 7 years of age.

Kidsafe recommends that children under the age of 12 do not sit in the front seat, especially when there is an airbag. Airbags are designed to protect occupants by reducing impact with the vehicle interior. They deploy at high speed to an adult's chest height and therefore dangerous for a small child. Refer to your vehicle owner's manual for further information on the airbags in your vehicle.

For further information

Other Kidsafe publications on child car restraints and passenger safety include:

- A Parent's Guide to Kidsafe Roads
- Child Restraint Guidelines: Keeping children as safe as possible while travelling in motor vehicles

If you require assistance with the installation or use of child car restraints contact Kidsafe WA.

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For more information **(08) 6244 4880**
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