

# A road safety booklet

for parents and carers of children 0 to 4 years



# Steps to road safety start at birth

**Congratulations! By reading this guide you have taken the first step to keeping your child safer in and around traffic.**

You may already know that many young children are injured in road crashes each year in WA. But did you know there are many simple ways to protect your child in the traffic environment?

Your child is not born knowing how to use the road system safely so just as you teach your child to walk and speak, road safety education needs to begin at birth.

Your child is listening, watching and copying your behaviours from a very young age. Being a good role model as a driver and a pedestrian and teaching your child about road safety will not only help your child stay safer now but also establish safer behaviours through their school years and beyond.

**This booklet is for all adults who look after children aged between 0 to 4 years old.**

It will tell you:

- why your child is at risk in the traffic environment
- what you can do to keep your child safer as a passenger and pedestrian, and when playing
- what tips you can use to help your child learn about road safety
- where to go for more information.



Look in the back pocket of this booklet for some fun road safety activities you and your child can do.



Your child depends on you to keep them safe as a passenger, pedestrian and when they are playing.

## 0 to 4 year olds ...

... **need to be supervised** by an adult at all times in and around traffic.

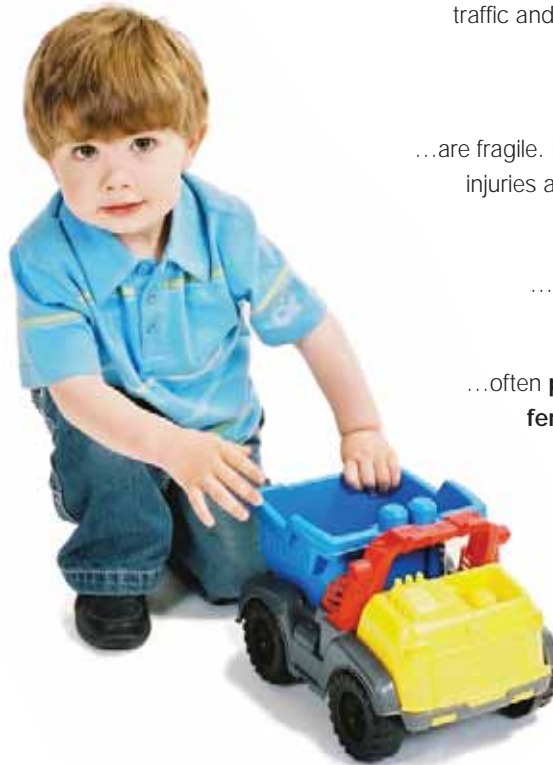
...are **wanting to be independent**. They might not always want to hold an adult's hand when near traffic.

...are often **placed in incorrectly fitted child car restraints** or in restraints that aren't suitable for their weight and size.

...are **curious**. This can lead to danger if left alone in the car.

...may **not want to sit still in the car**. They don't know that their behaviour can **distract the driver**.

...**can't work out where traffic sounds are coming from**. They need help to understand what to **watch out and listen** for.



...are **small**. They can be hard to see in traffic and when drivers are reversing or pulling into driveways.

...are fragile. Because of their small size, injuries are likely to be more severe.

...may be **easily distracted**.

...often **play in areas that are not fenced**. This means they can wander into danger in an instant.

...are **learning how to handle a wheeled toy or bicycle**. Injuries can be reduced by **wearing a helmet** and closed in shoes.

## Keep your child safe by ...

...**supervising them at all times** when in or near traffic.

...using your knowledge and experience to **predict when a traffic situation might become dangerous**.

...making sure they are **always wearing an approved child car restraint** that is suitable for their weight and size.

...talking with them about why it is **important to wear a restraint** and teach them how to put their restraint on.

...**always holding their hand** when walking in or near traffic.

...talking with them about **how to cross the road** and practise whenever you are out and about.



...**checking before reversing** to avoid injuring them in driveways. Set up a 'safety spot' for your child to stand on with an adult or put them in the car in their restraint so you know where they are.

...setting up places for them to **play safely away from traffic** and under your supervision.

...making sure they **always wear a bike helmet** even if they don't want to.

Your child will learn traffic skills by watching and copying the way you behave in and around traffic. Take the time to talk with your child about staying safe and practise these traffic skills every day. Keep reading for some useful tips on how to help your child stay safe.



## Passenger safety

**Buckle up every child, every time, every trip.**

A properly fitted child car restraint can drastically reduce your child's chance of serious injury or death in a crash.

It's important to have **family rules about restraints** and stick to them every time you are in the car even if:

- you are only driving a short distance
- you are driving slowly
- your child is asleep
- your child is restless or does not want to be buckled up.



**Did you know** it is law for infants and children up until the age of seven years to be restrained in an approved and appropriate child car restraint for their size and weight?

- It is law that children aged between four and seven years will not be permitted to sit in the front seat unless all other seating positions are occupied by children under seven.
- The safest position for your child's car restraint is the middle of the back seat.



# Choosing the right child car restraint for your child

Your child's size is most important when choosing the right car restraint. Here are the different restraints your child will need as they grow.

## STAGE 1

Rear facing infant restraint  
Birth to 9kg  
(or 70cm in length)



It is safer to leave your baby rearward facing as long as possible. Check the weight range of your restraint and the size of your child. Your child can move to a forward facing position when they are:

- at least 6 months of age or too big for the restraint.
- more than 8kg in weight and have good head control.

Convertible (dual purpose) car restraint  
Suitable for infants up to 12kg



## STAGE 2

Forward facing toddler seat  
From 8 to 18kg



Your child must weigh more than 8kg and have good head control before moving to this stage.

## STAGE 3

Booster seat  
From 14 to 26kg



Children are safest in a toddler seat that has an inbuilt harness until 18kg.

***Use your child's car restraint for as long as possible before moving to the next stage.***

It is recommended that your child's car restraint is properly fitted and checked by an Authorised Child Car Restraint fitter.

For more information on child car restraints including selecting the right one for your child and fitting and checking locations call 1300 780 713 or visit [www.childcarrestraints.com.au](http://www.childcarrestraints.com.au)



## Getting children in and out of the car

The safest door to take your child in and out of the car is the rear door, closest to the kerb or verge away from traffic. This is the Safety Door.

The safest way to get more than one child in and out of the car is to always place the least mobile child into the car last and take them out of the car first.

**Never leave your child alone in a car, even for short periods.**

**The safest place for your child is with you. They are in danger of:**

- heat stress and dehydration – even with the windows wound down
- burns from hot seat buckles
- playing with car controls such as power windows, cigarette lighters and hand brakes.

**When buckling them in or driving them around, talk with your child about:**

- why it's important to buckle up on every trip
- why the least mobile child gets placed into the car last and gets taken out first on every trip
- why you won't start the car unless everyone is properly buckled up
- the Safety Door and why it is the safest door to get in and out of the car
- why it's important to not distract you while you are driving
- why they should never stay in a car alone
- why it's important to stand next to the car and wait for your instructions
- where traffic hazards may come from when you remove them from the car.



Look in the back pocket for some passenger safety activities and a *Smart Steps* Safety Door sticker to use with your child.

### Use these passenger safety messages

- 'When every one is buckled up, I can start the car.'
- 'If anyone isn't properly buckled up, I stop the car.'
- 'I will help you unbuckle your restraint.'
- 'I will help you get in and out through the Safety Door of the car.'
- 'Sitting quietly in your seat helps me drive more safely.'
- Children are always watching and copying what you do in the car. Wear your seat belt every trip, short or long.





## Pedestrian safety

Their safety is in your hands.

Holding your child's hand is the most effective way to keep them safe from pedestrian injury.

It's important to have a family rule that your child always holds hands with an adult (or when not available holds onto the pram, bag or the clothes of the adult) near roads. Stick to this rule even if your child complains.

### **When holding your child's hand, talk with them about:**

- why they need to hold hands near roads and traffic
- why it's not safe to run ahead
- where and when it is safe to cross the road
- stopping back from the kerb or edge of road with you before crossing
- looking with you for cars, trucks, motor bikes or machinery that may be on roads, in car parks, coming out of driveways or moving around the farm
- listening with you for these vehicles
- thinking when it's safe to cross and always checking until you are both safely across a road, a driveway or through a car park
- car parks and help them identify the dangers by watching and listening for moving vehicles, reverse lights, exhaust fumes and reversing alarms on trucks
- road signs and markings and explain what they mean.





## Use these pedestrian safety messages

'Whenever we're out walking we hold hands or you hold the pram or my bag.'

'There's no running ahead.'

'Before we cross the road together we always STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK.'

Model safe pedestrian behaviours by obeying traffic rules, road signs and choose safe places to cross.



Look in the back pocket of this booklet for some pedestrian safety activities and a 'Hold my hand' transfer to use with your child.





## Play safety

Keep them close, stay alert.

**Every week in Australia, a child is runover in the driveway of their own home.**

Roads, driveways, car parks, footpaths or around farm machinery are not safe places for young children to play. Children are fast and unpredictable. They can move out of your sight and into danger in an instant. Choose a fenced park or yard for your child to play in and supervise them at all times.

### **Know where your child is before you or anyone else leaves your driveway.**

It is important to have a family rule about where your child stands when cars are coming in or out of your property. For example 'We wave goodbye to visitors from the verandah.' You may find it useful to call this place the Safety Spot. Make sure other adults who care for your child know about this family rule.



Play away  
from  
driveways.





## Play safety

**A young child's skull is soft and easily injured. Bike helmets help reduce injuries.**

It is the law in WA to wear a correctly fitted and Australian Standards Approved helmet when riding a bike on the road, footpath or cycle path. Children riding bikes with training wheels or sitting in a baby seat behind an adult must also wear a helmet.

If you make sure your child wears a helmet from the time they start riding their first wheeled toy they will be safer from head injury and more likely to continue this safe practice throughout their lives.

### Buying and fitting your child's bike helmet

- Choose an Australian Standard Approved helmet.
- Place the helmet on your child's head.
- It should fit two child finger widths above your child's eyebrows and should be neither too tight nor loose. Use the pads supplied to make it a snug fit.
- Adjust the straps. The side strap should form a 'Y' shape below your child's ears and the buckle should fit snugly under the chin.
- Choose a different size if necessary as a loose helmet can increase the risk of injury.





## Play safety

Keep them close, stay alert.

**Make sure your child rides in a park or on a cycle path well away from traffic and roads.**

**When supervising your child playing or riding talk to them about:**

- why footpaths, roads and driveways are not safe places to play
- how helmets, enclosed shoes, wrist and knee pads keep them safer when riding bikes, scooters and skateboards
- why they should not ride their bike, scooter or skateboard without an adult watching.

**Use these safer playing messages with your child:**

'Don't play in the driveway or near the road.'

'Never play near the farm machinery.'

'Never follow your ball onto the road.'

'Stand on the safety spot to wave goodbye to visitors or other family members'.

'No helmet and shoes, no bike or scooter.'

**Model safe riding behaviours for your child:**

- always wear a bike helmet
- give way to pedestrians
- use a bell when approaching
- ride single file.



## For more information



*Smart Steps* is an initiative of School Drug Education and Road Aware. It provides free resources such as pamphlets, posters, a DVD and stickers that highlight safer road user practices.

Phone: (08) 9264 4743  
Email: [sdera@det.wa.edu.au](mailto:sdera@det.wa.edu.au)  
Website: [www.sdera.wa.edu.au](http://www.sdera.wa.edu.au)

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Department for Communities support parents and families to access current and relevant information regarding road safety through community parenting services, early years sites and children services.

Phone: (08) 62178700  
Website: [www.community.wa.gov.au](http://www.community.wa.gov.au)

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The Child Car Restraint Information Line and [www.childcarrestraints.com.au](http://www.childcarrestraints.com.au) has the contact details for Type 1 Child Car Restraint fitters (people who fit and check child car restraints); advice on child car restraints; and schedule of child car restraint fitting and checking days occurring in the state.

Phone: (08) 9213 2068 and  
(08) 9213 2066  
Child Car Restraint Information Line  
1300 780 713  
Email: [roadwise@walga.asn.au](mailto:roadwise@walga.asn.au)  
Website: [www.roadwise.asn.au](http://www.roadwise.asn.au)

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Kidsafe WA provides a range of child injury prevention information sessions for parents and caregivers on request. A range of road safety resources for parents are available on the Kidsafe WA website. Kidsafe WA also conducts a comprehensive child car restraint fitting, checking, hiring, information and advice service. Bookings are essential.

Phone: (08) 9340 8509  
Child Safety Information Line  
1800 802 244 (9am-4pm Mon-Fri)  
Email: [kidsafe@kidsafewa.com.au](mailto:kidsafe@kidsafewa.com.au)  
Website: [www.kidsafewa.com.au](http://www.kidsafewa.com.au)

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Meerilinga offers a free parent-to-parent service for families including home visits; up-to-date, researched information; and parent workshops and links to networks. Bookings are essential for workshops.

Phone: (08) 9489 4022  
Email: [mycf@meerilinga.org.au](mailto:mycf@meerilinga.org.au)  
Website: [www.meerilinga.org.au](http://www.meerilinga.org.au)

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Ngala offers a range of education programs, a Helpline and consultation to WA communities, including information on road safety.

Phone: 1800 171 882  
Email: [ngala@ngala.com.au](mailto:ngala@ngala.com.au)  
Website: [www.ngala.com.au](http://www.ngala.com.au)

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Playgroup WA offers a range of workshops throughout WA that focus on topics such as 'Keeping your child safe in traffic'. A minimum number of attendees are required to hold a workshop.

Phone: 1800 171 882  
Email: [admin@playgroupwa.com.au](mailto:admin@playgroupwa.com.au)  
Website: [www.playgroupwa.com.au](http://www.playgroupwa.com.au)

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The RAC provides information and advice to parents and carers about choosing, installing and fitting child restraints; legal requirements; types of restraints, anchorage points and accessories. Child Restraint Checks are also available from RAC Auto Services.

Phone: (08) 9436 4471  
Website: [www.rac.com.au](http://www.rac.com.au)

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The Australian Red Cross hires and sells baby capsules and car seats, and sells booster seats in many locations in WA.

Free Call 1800 251 463

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Community health nurses and Health Promotion/Injury Prevention Officers may be available to talk to parents (individuals and groups) on road safety issues, and on the selection and checking of child car restraints.

Phone: (08) 9222 4222  
Email: [PRContact@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PRContact@health.wa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.health.wa.gov.au)

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For further information on Smart Steps contact:



151 Royal Street  
EAST PERTH WA 6004

[www.sdera.wa.edu.au](http://www.sdera.wa.edu.au)

Telephone: (08) 9264 4743

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