



**Kids don't grow up as  
fast as you think.**

**Child restraint laws are changing.**

**New child restraint laws will affect children aged 0-7 years. The changes to the laws are designed to ensure that children are better protected when travelling in cars. Use this information to be prepared before the laws change.**

## **Why are child restraint laws changing?**

Many parents are unwittingly graduating their children to adult seat belts too early. This seriously compromises their safety in the event of a crash. Every year, approximately 1,300 children are killed or injured on Australian roads. That equates to 14 child passengers aged between 0-16 years killed on Western Australian roads, with a further 230 seriously injured. New law changes will help ensure our children stay safer on our roads and reduce unnecessary suffering for WA families.

## **What does the current law say about child restraints?**

Currently, Western Australian law requires children less than 12 months of age to be restrained in a suitable approved child restraint. However, older children can be restrained in either an approved child restraint or a properly fastened seat belt, where one is available.

## **How are the laws changing?**

An adult seat belt alone does not provide small children an adequate level of safety when travelling in a vehicle. The new laws will reduce the risk of injury caused by the use of restraints that are unsuitable for the child's age and size. They specify the type of restraint to be used at different ages and where children must be seated in a vehicle.

Specifically, the new laws will require children:

- from birth to the age of six months to be restrained in a rearward-facing child restraint
- from six months until the age of four years to be restrained in either a rearward or forward-facing child restraint with inbuilt harness
- from four years until the age of seven years to be restrained in either a forward-facing child restraint with inbuilt harness or booster seat restrained by a correctly adjusted and fastened seat belt or child harness

- under four years must be in the rear seats of a vehicle if the vehicle has at least two rows of seats
- between 4 years and up to their 7th birthday are not permitted in the front seats of a vehicle, unless all rear seats are occupied by children less than seven years of age

Children who are outside weight / size guidelines for existing restraints will be able to use the restraint type for the next age group.

## Which restraint do I use for my child?

### Children under 6 months



Single purpose - rearward facing



Convertible restraint - rearward facing

Children under six months must use an approved rearward-facing child restraint and travel only in the rear row (if your car does not have a rear row, this part of the rule does not apply).

There are four kinds of approved rearward-facing child restraints:

#### **Single purpose (rearward-facing only)**

1. upper weight limit of 9 kg
2. upper weight limit of 12 kg

#### **Convertible (can be used as a rearward and forward-facing child restraint)**

3. upper weight limit of 9 kg in a rearward position, 18 kg for forward-facing
4. upper weight limit of 12 kg in a rearward position, 18 kg for forward-facing

It is best for a baby to stay in a rearward-facing restraint as long as possible according to the weight limits of the restraint.

## 6 months to under 4 years



*Single purpose - child restraint*



*Convertible restraint  
in forward-facing mode*

Children in this age group must travel only in the rear row (if your car does not have a rear row, this part of the rule does not apply).

Children grow at different rates between the age of 6 months and 4 years, so a child may use either a rearward-facing child restraint or a forward-facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness.



*Combination restraint  
with internal harness*

There are three kinds of approved forward-facing child restraints:

- single-purpose child restraint (8–18 kg)
- convertible restraint in forward-facing mode with an upper weight limit of 18 kg
- combination restraint that can be used as a forward-facing child restraint (8–18 kg)

If your child has turned four years, is still under 18 kg and fits in the forward-facing child restraint with inbuilt harness, it is recommended to keep using this restraint.

## 4 years to under 7 years



*Combination restraint  
in booster function*



*Booster seat with seat belt*

Children in this age group must not travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has a back row or rows unless all the other back seats are occupied by children who are also under seven years.

A child may use either a forward-facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness OR an approved booster seat with lap-sash seat belt. If you are using a seating position with a lap-only seat belt, you must also use an additional child harness.

There are two kinds of approved booster seats:

- single purpose booster seat (14 – 26 kg)
- combination restraint used in booster seat mode

Children seven years of age and over can use an adult seat belt as the law currently allows, however, if your child has turned seven years, is under 26 kg and still fits a booster seat it is recommended to keep using this restraint.

## Like to find out more?

For more information please visit [www.childcarrestraints.com.au](http://www.childcarrestraints.com.au)  
or call 1300 780 713.



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