



SAFE & SECURE

Choose and use the
right car seat for your child

When installed and used correctly, child car seats and booster seats can reduce the risk of children being injured or killed in collisions.

By law, drivers are responsible for ensuring passengers under 16 years of age are secured properly in a seat belt, a child car seat or booster seat.

Community car seat inspection clinics indicate that many child car seats are installed and or used incorrectly. Common errors include not tightening the seat belt, Universal Anchorage System (UAS) strap and harness straps enough, and not properly using a tether strap when it's required.

Make sure your child is safe and secure and is buckled up right.



**Collisions are the main cause of death
for Canadian children**

Ontario's Highway Traffic Act requires children to use a rear-facing car seat until the child weighs at least 9 kg (20 lb.). It's best to keep your child in a rear-facing child car seat until they reach the manufacturer's recommended maximum weight and height limits. Some rear-facing car seats are made for children that weigh up to 20 kg (45 lb.)

A rear-facing child car seat:

- faces the back of the vehicle
- sits at an angle recommended by the car seat manufacturer (usually 45-degrees)
- when installed properly, should move no more than 2.5 cm (1 in.) at the point where the seat belt or UAS strap passes through it. Use body weight and pull the seat belt or UAS strap to tighten.

If necessary, use a tightly rolled towel or a foam bar (pool noodle) under the base of the child car seat to adjust the recline angle.

Harness straps:

- Sit at or slightly below the child's shoulders
- The chest clip should be flat against the child's chest at armpit level
- You should not be able to pinch any excess harness strap at the child's collarbone

When a child outgrows the maximum weight or height limits of an infant rear-facing car seat, they may move to a larger convertible infant/child car seat and stay rear-facing until the child is ready to face forward.

Infants



Toddlers

Ontario's Highway Traffic Act allows children weighing 9 kg to 18 kg (20 to 40 lb.) to use a forward-facing child car seat **or** a rear-facing car seat as long as the car seat manufacturer recommends its use. Some forward-facing car seats are made for children that weigh up to 30 kg (65 lb.).



A forward-facing car seat:

- Uses a tether strap to prevent the child car seat from moving forward and causing injury in a collision. Check your vehicle owner's and car seat manuals to see whether the seat belt or UAS strap should be used to secure the child car seat.
- Is installed using body weight and by pulling the seat belt or UAS strap to tighten
- When installed properly, it should move no more than 2.5 cm (1 in.) at the point where the belt or UAS strap passes through it

Harness straps:

- Sit at or slightly above the child's shoulders
- You should not be able to pinch any excess harness strap at the child's shoulder
- The chest clip must be flat against the chest at armpit level

It's best to keep your child in a forward-facing car seat until they reach the manufacturer's weight and height limits. It is important to use the tether strap exactly as the manufacturer recommends. Read your owner's manual to find the tether locations in your vehicle and how they must be used. If there is no tether anchor in the vehicle, contact a dealership to have one installed.

Pre-school to 8 years

Ontario's Highway Traffic Act requires children weighing 18 kg to 36 kg (40 to 80 lb.), standing less than 145 cm (4 ft. 9 in.) tall and who are under the age of 8 to use a booster seat or allows the continued use of a forward-facing seat as long as the car seat manufacturer recommends its use.

A booster seat:

- Can be a high-back style or a base without a back
- Raises the child up so the seat belt is properly positioned across the body
- Is used with a lap and shoulder belt combination only
- Protects 3½ times better than using a seat belt alone

Fit the seat belt properly:

- The shoulder portion of the seat belt must lie across the shoulder, not the neck or face and across the middle of the chest
- The lap portion of the seat belt must cross low and snug over the hips, not the stomach
- The child's head must be supported by the top of the booster seat, the vehicle seat or the vehicle seat headrest
- Never use seat belt adjusters.

It's best to keep your child in a booster seat until they reach the manufacturer's recommended maximum weight and height limits.



Older Children

Seat belts are designed to protect older children and adults. Once a child can sit against the back of the vehicle seat with their legs bent comfortably over the edge, and they can maintain this position for the entire trip, they may be ready to move from the booster seat to the vehicle seat belt.



A seat belt must:

- Fit properly
 - The shoulder portion of the seat belt must lie flat across the shoulder and the middle of the chest, not the neck or face
 - The lap portion of the seat belt must cross low and snug over the hips, not the stomach
- Never put two children in the same seat belt.

Never place the shoulder strap behind the child's back or under their arm.

Ontario's Highway Traffic Act allows a child to use a seat belt alone when any one of the following occurs:

- Child turns 8 years old, or
- Child weighs 36 kg (80 lb.), or
- Child is 145 cm (4 ft. 9 in.) tall or more

Look for the safety label

All child car seats and booster seats manufactured for use in Canada are tested to meet specific Canadian regulations and standards, which are different from other countries. When shopping for a child car seat or booster seat, look for the National Safety Mark label attached to the seat.



Check for a useful life or expiry date

Every child car seat and booster seat sold in Canada has an expiry or useful life date on them. They should not be used if they have passed the date.



Pre-owned child car seats

Be careful when buying or using a pre-owned child car seat. Make sure it was manufactured on or after January 1, 2012. Make sure the car seat:

- meets all current federal safety standards
- has instructions and all necessary straps and hardware
- has never been in a collision
- meets Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and displays the National Safety Mark
- has not expired or exceeded its useful life date as determined by the manufacturer
- has no discoloured stress marks or cracks and the harness straps are not worn or torn

Does your child have a special need?

In Ontario, if your child has a special need, such as a medical condition, that does not allow your child to use a conventional child car seat, you may choose to use an alternative child restraint system for children with special needs that complies with federal safety standards. For more information, visit: laws.justice.gc.ca/en/SOR-98-159

Keep them safe and secure

- Use the right car seat for your child's height, weight and development
- Install the car seat a couple of weeks before the child arrives. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and check the vehicle owner's manual for correct installation
- Keep children away from active front air bags. Children 12 years of age and under are safest in the back seat.
- Avoid using items that did not come with the child car seat. Contact the car seat manufacturer to see if the item is safe to use with the car seat.

For more info visit: ontario.ca/carseats

Also check:

- Transport Canada - tc.gc.ca/roadsafety
- Health Canada - hc-sc.gc.ca
- Your local Public Health Unit