



# Child Restraints

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is my child required to use an accessory child safety harness with a booster seat?

- The booster seat (for children 4 years to 7 years) has been designed to be used with an adult seatbelt.
- The child safety harness is an accessory and is not required to be used with a booster seat.
- The child safety harness offers no better protection than the adult lap/sash seatbelt when used with a booster seat and can reduce the level of protection when misused.
- If a child is big enough for a booster seat then they are big enough to use it with the standard adult seat belt.
- An accessory child safety harness is used where there is only a lap seat belt available in the seating position such as the centre rear seat.
- The child safety harness should only be used with a booster seat that incorporates an anti-submarine clip. These clips help to keep the lap seat belt correctly positioned and down low on the child's hips.

### I don't understand the different harnesses used with child restraints.

- An inbuilt six point harness forms part of the child restraint. It is incorporated into the design, attaching to the child restraint at six different points on the restraint.
- A child safety harness is an accessory which is purchased separately to a child restraint and should only be used in a seating position that has a lap only seat belt. It attaches to an anchor point in the car.



For the latest research report on Accessory Child Safety Harnesses please see:

*Accessory child safety harnesses: Do the risks outweigh the benefits?* Julie Brown, Derek Wainohu, Peter Aquilina, Basuki Suratno, Paul Kelly, Lynne E Bilston. Accident Analysis & Prevention, Volume 42, Issue 1, January 2010, pages 112-121.

### What is submarining?

- Submarining occurs when a child is forced forward and under the seatbelt ie they submarine or slide under the lap belt which can place the force of the crash onto the child's soft abdomen rather than the hip bones.
- Some child restraints which incorporate anti-submarining features or devices into their design.



### Can I use a booster cushion?

- At Kidsafe NSW, we recommend that you use a full booster seat.
- The full booster seat provides support for the upper body and increased head protection which is not provided by a booster cushion.

### How can I find out more about which child restraint is the most suitable for my child?

- In Australia, any child restraint sold must comply with the Australian Standard AS/NZ 1754:2004. The Child Restraint Evaluation Program (CREP) tests and assesses child restraints which have been approved under the Standard.
- The *safer child restraints—your guide to buying a child restraint* brochure provides guidelines for consumers to follow when purchasing a child restraint. A copy of the brochure is available for download at: [kidsafensw.org](http://kidsafensw.org) or [rta.nsw.gov.au](http://rta.nsw.gov.au)



**child safety is no accident**



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### How do I transport my child safely in a taxi?

- *Kidsafe NSW* recommends that parents/carers use their own restraint and book a taxi with anchor points.
- Taxi companies have a proportion of their fleet that carry a child restraint. It is essential that the taxi be booked well in advance to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is available, and that it has an appropriate seat for the day of travel.
- If arriving at an airport without pre-booking a taxi with a child restraint, seek out a 'Taxi Commissionaire' who can be identified by their yellow jackets. One of their roles is to assist customers with an appropriate taxi.
- If a taxi is not booked with a child restraint and/or there is not one available, a child can travel in the taxi using an adult seatbelt. *Kidsafe NSW* however does not recommend any child under 7 years of age travel in an adult seatbelt in any vehicle.

### How do I fit three child restraints in the back seat of my vehicle?

- Fitting three restraints in the rear of a sedan can be difficult depending on the make and model of your vehicle. You may need to investigate the range of restraints available.
- There are a number of booster seats with a narrow base on the market which may be suitable if your child is over 4 years.
- Manufacturers recognise the need for child restraints with narrower seats and constantly redesign and develop new child restraints to meet Australian Standards.

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### How can I stop my child getting their arms out of the restraint?

- Children learn by modelling the behaviour of others so always make sure you wear your own seatbelt.
- Be consistent and persistent with your child about correctly wearing a child restraint on every trip.
- Check that the restraint is suitable for your child, fits comfortably with no twists in the straps, and the inbuilt harness is adjusted firmly on your child.
- Devices are available which may limit the child's ability to get arms and torso out of the shoulder straps.

### Can I still use the third row auxiliary seats (dickie seats) for my child and do I need to use a child restraint?

- Children may still use a dickie seat if the category is suitable and rated for their size and/or age.
- If a dickie seat is rated for adult use than a child restraint must be used.
- Depending on the category of the dickie seat, you may be able to use the seat and seatbelt without a child restraint.
- You will need to read the vehicle manufacturer's instructions to check if the dickie seat will accommodate a child restraint.

### Can my child be placed in a child restraint in the front seat of a utility which only has one row of seats?

- A child restraint may be placed in the front seat of a utility if there is an appropriate anchor point and seat belt available.
- A booster seat without a tether strap may be used if there is no anchor point available and the child is over 4 years of age.
- In NSW, a child may not be seated in the front seat of any vehicle where there is an airbag fitted to deploy.

### When should I move my child into an adult seatbelt?

- Your child can move into an adult seat belt when they can achieve a correct fit. This is generally when they reach a height of between 140cm to 145cm. The sash part of the belt should cross the middle of your child's shoulder and should not go across the neck. The lap part of the belt should sit low across your child's hips and not across the abdomen.