

# Child restraints save lives



It's the law that all children under seven must be secured in an approved child restraint when travelling in a vehicle. Children aged seven must be secured in an approved child restraint if one is available in the vehicle, and if not, in any child restraint or seat belt that is available.

# Stage 1

## Rear-facing infant restraint



### Installing

- Always install the infant restraint so the baby is facing the rear of the car.
- Rear-facing infant restraints should never be placed in the front seat if there's an active front airbag.

### Using

- If there's a chest clip, make sure the clip sits at the baby's armpit level.
- The baby must be firmly secured into the child restraint before placing blankets over them.

### Progressing

- Babies are better protected travelling in a rear-facing restraint until they're at least two years old.
- Babies have outgrown their infant restraint when they're over the restraint manufacturer's recommended weight or height restrictions.

# Stage 2

## Forward-facing child restraint



### Installing

- If your child restraint comes with a tether strap, it must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- If your vehicle doesn't have an anchor point for the tether strap to be attached to, have one fitted into your car by a qualified mechanic.

### Using

- Check the manufacturer's instructions for the correct harness shoulder height.
- If there's a chest clip, make sure it's sitting at the level of your child's armpits.

### Progressing

- Children have outgrown their restraint when they are over the manufacturer's recommended weight or height restrictions for that model of forward-facing child restraint

# Stage 3

## Booster seat

### Installing

- Never use a booster seat with a lap seat belt only.



### Using

- If you have a booster seat that has a built-in harness system, use the harness until the child reaches the height or weight limit advised in the manufacturer's instructions, and then use the vehicle's seat belt.
- If your booster seat has a seat belt guide, make sure to use it every trip.
- A full booster seat with an adjustable head rest will provide better protection for your child than a booster cushion.
- Encourage your child not to lean out of the booster seat.

### Progressing

Best practice recommends that children stay in a restraint or booster seat until they're 148cm tall.

How to know when your child is ready to progress from a booster seat to the adult seat belt:

- The child can sit right back on the seat with their legs bent comfortably over the edge

- The seat belt is not against their neck
- The lap part of the seat belt sits low against their thighs, not across their stomach.
- The child stay seated like this for the whole trip.

If the answer is no to any of these questions, then your child needs to use a booster seat to keep them safe.

# At all stages



## Installing

Child restraints must be installed in the back seat.

## Using

The harness or belt (depending on stage) must fit snugly against your child and always go over the shoulder.

## Progressing

Follow manufacturer's recommendations for weight and height limits.

## Child restraint technicians

Retailers and other organisations may have certified child restraint technicians who can help.

[nzta.govt.nz/childrestraints](https://nzta.govt.nz/childrestraints)



# Child restraints and airbags

Always check your vehicle's manual and the child restraint manufacturer's instructions for advice on where to install the restraint in relation to the location of the airbags.

## Front airbags

- Rear-facing child restraints must always be placed in the back seat if there's an active front seat airbag.
- If an older child must sit in the front, move the vehicle seat as far back as possible.

## Side airbags

- If you have to install a child restraint directly beside a vehicle door, make sure there are no loose items lying between the child restraint and door.



# General tips

- ✓ Before you purchase or hire a child restraint, make sure it fits your vehicle and is suitable for your child.
- ✓ Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ The back seat is the safest place for your child restraint.
- ✓ Check your child's restraint fits firmly against the seat and can't wobble. If your restraint doesn't fit firmly, seek advice from a registered child restraint technician.

## More information

For more information and helpful videos on how to safely use child restraints, and to find your local child restraint technician, visit:

[nzta.govt.nz/childrestraints](https://nzta.govt.nz/childrestraints)  
[plunket.org.nz](https://plunket.org.nz)  
[safekids.org.nz](https://safekids.org.nz)

