

CHILD RESTRAINTS

<http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/children/childrestraints/index.html>

Summary of changes

The new national child restraint laws state:

- Children younger than six months must be secured in a rearward facing restraint.
- Children aged six months to under four years must be secured in either a rear or forward facing restraint.
- Children aged four years to under seven years must be secured in forward facing child restraint or booster seat.
- Children younger than four years cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows.
- Children aged four years to under seven years cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle with two or more rows, unless all other back seats are occupied by children younger than seven years in a child restraint or booster seat.

Children 4-7yrs

Children aged between 4 years and 7 years must be restrained in an approved forward-facing restraint or booster seat. Booster seats are used with an adult lap-sash seatbelt and feature high backs and sides which provide protection for children in side impact crashes as well as providing support when a child is sleeping.

Children should travel in a booster seat that is secured by an adult lap-sash seatbelt, never in a lap-only belt.

A booster seat should be used until your child's shoulders no longer comfortably fit within the booster seat or when their eye-level is higher than the back of the booster seat.

Older children and those 145cm tall

It is strongly recommended that children aged 7 years and over stay in their booster seats until they are too big for them. Adult lap-sash seatbelts are designed for people with a minimum height of 145 cm. Lap-sash seatbelts offer greater protection to passengers than lap-only seatbelts, but they must fit correctly. This means that the lap belt is positioned low over the hip and the sash belt sits in the middle of the shoulder and does not touch the neck.

This is from the FAQ section on the website.

Can my child sit in the front seat?

This depends on whether there is more than one row of seats in the car and the age of the child.

Where there are two or more rows of seats:

- A child under four years of age cannot sit in the front row of a car if there is more than one row of seats, even if they are large enough to fit in a booster seat.
- A child between four years of age and under seven years of age cannot sit in the front row of a vehicle that has more than one row of seats unless the other rows are occupied by younger children in an approved child restraint.

Note: you can only fit a booster seat in the front row of a vehicle if that booster seat does not require a top tether strap.

If the car has one row of seats (for example a single cab ute or sports car with a front anchorage point) a child of any age can sit in the front seat provided they are properly restrained. However, most car manufacturers recommend against the use of rearward facing restraints in front passenger seats.

A child in a rearward facing restraint should not be placed in the front seat of a vehicle where there is an air bag.

Can my child use an additional ("dickie") seat?

Additional seats are permitted for use for children aged four and less than seven years, without the need to be used in conjunction with a booster seat or child restraint, provided the seat is suitable for the child's size and weight and a lap and sash seatbelt or lap seatbelt with an approved child safety harness is used.

If I have four children under seven years of age can I carry them in my car?

This will depend on the age of your children and the size of your car as well as the type of your child restraint and booster seats you have.

If you have a standard sedan with two rows of seats you should be able to accommodate three child restraints in the second row and carry one child aged over four years of age in the front row.

There are a range of booster seats available with a narrow base which may be suitable if your child is four years or over. Manufacturers have recognised this need and are constantly redesigning and developing new child restraints that meet our Australian Standards.

What if my child is too small or too large for the type of restraint specified for my child's age?

If a child is too small for a restraint specified for their age, they should be kept in a previous level of restraint for as long as necessary.

If a child is too large for a restraint specified for their age, they may move to the next level of restraint.

A child aged between six months and four years of age will need to move to the next level of restraint when:

- Their shoulders no longer fit comfortably within the restraint; or
- Their eye-level is higher than the back of the restraint; or
- The top insertion slots for the shoulder straps are below the level of the child's shoulders.

A child aged between four and seven years of age will need to move to the next level of restraint if:

- Their shoulders no longer fit comfortably within the restraint; or
- Their eye-level is higher than the back of the booster seat (when measured perpendicularly from the seat back).

Children should remain in a child restraint for as long as physically possible.