

**Questions Answered by the Presenters After Children's Safety Network's  
Protecting Kids in Cars: Approaches to Child Passenger Safety Webinar  
October 18, 2023  
1:00PM – 2:00PM ET**

Are light jackets for toddlers ok to wear under seat belt (car seat) in cold weather? I know it's not really encouraged to wear heavy coats while in car seat.

[From the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)'s Winter Driving Tips:](#)

“In colder weather, parents typically dress their children in winter coats. But it's important to know that heavy coats can interfere with the proper harness fit on a child in a car seat. When your child will be secured in a car seat, pick thin, warm layers, and place blankets or coats around your child after the harness is snug and secure for extra warmth.”

**Options for children with disabilities.**

Here is a resource to get you started:

- Automotive Safety Program through Riley Hospital for Children:  
<https://preventinjury.medicine.iu.edu/adaptive-needs>

**Many parents ask if, and some assume that, you can lock the seatbelt to better restrain a booster seat rider. Switchable Retractor and Belt-Positioning Boosters. Many manf. instructions do not say one way or the other: Do we assume it is allowed, then?**

First and foremost, consider whether the child is behaviorally ready to be in a booster. Since most forward-facing car seats with internal harnesses go to 65 pounds, that may be a better option for maintaining child positioning.

Second, manufacturer instructions cannot and do not contain the answers to every possible usage scenario. When a specific topic is not addressed, that does **not** mean that the specific usage is OK.

[Here is a general answer from the Manufacturers Alliance for Child Passenger Safety \(MACPS\):](#)

“If the booster seat manufacturer and vehicle manufacturer both permit, the MACPS does not prohibit using the vehicle retractor in the locked mode with a belt-positioning booster. FMVSS 213 test setup uses a “locked” belt for certification testing. Please refer to the instructions of each manufacturer prior to switching the retractor to the locked mode. (February 2021)”

## Resources for free car seats

Resources vary by state. Here are three places to begin looking:

- Contact your state highway safety office: <https://www.ghsa.org/about/shsos>
- Contact your state or local Safe Kids coalition for information & insight: <https://www.safekids.org/safe-kids-coalitions-united-states>
- Ask your state child passenger safety training contact for help: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/car-seats-and-booster-seats/training-contacts-state-child-passenger-safety>

**What research has been/is being done to support the best practice of not putting 4 year olds in a belt-positioning booster?**

[From the American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\):](#)

“Booster seats are for older children who have outgrown their forward-facing seats. All children whose weight or height exceeds the forward-facing limit for their car safety seat should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8 to 12 years of age. Most children will not fit in most vehicle seat belts without a booster until 10 to 12 years of age. All children younger than 13 years should ride in the back seat. Instructions that come with your car safety seat will tell you the height and weight limits for the seat. As a general guideline, a child has outgrown a forward-facing seat when any of the following situations is true:

- They reach the top weight or height allowed for their seat with a harness. (These limits are listed on the seat and in the instruction manual.)
- Their shoulders are above the top harness slots.
- The tops of their ears have reached the top of the seat.”

[From NHTSA:](#)

“Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat’s manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it’s time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat.”

**Any educational information on counterfeit car seats?**

- Resources from Safe Ride News: <https://www.saferidenews.com/resources/unsafe-products/>
- From NHTSA: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/safety-advisory-nhtsa-urges-parents-and-caregivers-not-use-or-purchase-car-seats>

- From MACPS: <https://www.saferidenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CRS-Determining-U.S.-Compliance.pdf>

### **Are the new types of rotating car seats as safe as traditional ones?**

All car seats must meet the same stringent performance standards (contained in [FMVSS 213](#)), whether they have rotation features or not.

Beginning in June 2025, certain car seats must also meet [new side-impact performance standards](#), whether they have rotation features or not.

### **Any resources instructing non -English speaking parents/caregivers? Influx of immigrants, asylum seekers in our state....**

This list is not even close to exhaustive, but it will get you started:

- From NHTSA (Spanish): <https://www.nhtsa.gov/es/equipos/car-seats-y-asientos-elevados-booster-seats>
- From AAP (English/Spanish): <https://healthychildren.org/>
- From Safe Kids Worldwide (English/Spanish): [https://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/skw-gm\\_basic\\_car\\_seat\\_safety\\_-\\_spanish.pdf](https://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/skw-gm_basic_car_seat_safety_-_spanish.pdf)
- From SafetyBeltSafe, USA (multiple tools in English/Spanish): <https://carseat.org/child-passenger-safety-resources-and-technical-materials/>; “Keep Your Children Safe” brochure (low reading level; California and national versions available) in Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese: <https://carseat.safetybeltsafeusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Non-English-Language-Brochures-Available-from-SafetyBeltSafe-U.S.A..pdf>

### **Does NHTSA or other source have a good graphic that shows the 5-step test?**

- Video from NHTSA: <https://youtu.be/WdFabLhMqjE>
- Worksheet from SafetyBeltSafe, USA: <https://carseat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Try-the-5-Step-Test-Today.pdf>

**What would you do in a case where a child exceeds a harness by height, but a booster doesn't really make the seatbelt fit properly?**

The situation may be accommodated by selecting a different car seat model. Different car seats have different maximum harness heights, ranging from around 16" to 20" from the seat pan to the highest shoulder harness adjustment. That results in up to a 4+ inch extension of rump to shoulder heights just through car seat model selection.