



Safety in and around cars

Accidents can and do happen when reversing on driveways or in car parks. Look out for children when manoeuvring your car.

- ✎ Make sure your child is either in the car or with an adult before you move the car.
- ✎ Teach young children that cars can be dangerous even when they are moving very slowly.
- ✎ Hold your toddler's hand in car parks just as you would when crossing the road. Remember other cars manoeuvring may not be able to spot children who are below the level visible from their rear or side windows.
- ✎ Keep your car keys out of sight and reach of young children so that they don't get hold of them and try to start the car. Make sure the hand brake is firmly on.

Be careful that your child's fingers are not caught in windows or doors when they are getting in or out of the car. Teach small children to keep their arms well tucked in when you close the doors and do not let them play with windows. Disengage electric window switches in the back if your car allows it and make sure the child door locks are activated.

A quick guide to the law

The law applies to cars, vans and other goods vehicles.

Child under three years

You must always use a child restraint appropriate for the child's age, height and weight whether the child is travelling in the front or rear of the vehicle. If an appropriate restraint is not available, it is illegal for a child to travel in the vehicle. The only exception is in a taxi if the correct child restraint is not available.

Child aged 3–11, but less than 135cm in height

You must use an appropriate child restraint for the child's age, height and weight in the front seat and, if seat belts are fitted, in the rear seat. The only exceptions to this are where the correct child restraint is not available in the following situations:

- ✎ in a taxi where the correct child restraint is not available
- ✎ for reason of unexpected necessity over a short distance
- ✎ two occupied child restraints prevent a third from being fitted.

In these cases an adult seat belt must be used.

Child over 135cm, or 12 years and over

An adult seat belt must be worn if fitted.

Further information about choosing a child car seat can be obtained from www.childcarseats.org.uk.

capt is a charity committed to reducing childhood injury.

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how safe is your child in the car?

a safety guide for parents and carers



By following the safety advice in this leaflet you can help to prevent your child from being seriously injured or even dying in a car accident.

Understanding car seats

When buying a child car seat, you will now see two different classifications:

Group (0-III) is based on the weight and physical development of the child. Age ranges are given too but these are for guidance only.

i-Size is based on the child's height rather than weight. i-Size seats all offer side impact protection. They fit all i-Size ready cars and some ISOFIX cars, using ISOFIX anchor points. But not all i-Size seats fit all ISOFIX cars so we advise you to check if the seat is approved for your car before buying.

The i-Size classification will run alongside seats classified by group until at least 2018.

Babies

It is safest for babies to travel rear-facing for as long as possible. Don't be tempted to move a baby to a forward-facing seat just because their feet are pressing against the seat back. Wait until they reach the weight limit for the child car seat or the top of their head is at the top of the child car seat.

Rear-facing seats are either Group 0+ (Group 0 seats are not now readily available) or i-Size. With i-Size seats, babies stay rear-facing until they are at least 15 months old.

Always travel with your baby on the back seat if you can. If it is essential for them to be in the front seat **the passenger airbag MUST be switched off**, otherwise it will harm your baby if it activates against the rear-facing seat in a crash.

Remember, child car seats are not intended to be places for babies to sleep when not travelling. Move them to a Moses basket or cot as soon as you can.



Toddlers and young children

When your baby has outgrown their baby seat they can be moved to a child seat with a built-in harness. These seats are mostly forward-facing. Some rear-facing seats are now available. The group to look for is Group I. Forward-facing i-Size seats will come onto the market.

It is safest to keep your child in a car seat with an integral harness for as long as possible. Only move your child from a child car seat to a booster seat when their eye line is above the child seat back or the weight limit is reached.

Toddlers and young children are safest if they travel in the back seat.

Older children

Many booster seats 'grow' upwards and outwards with your child. Booster seats in group II and III are suitable for children from 15kg to 36kg. They can provide side protection and support. i-Size booster seats will become available. All will offer side impact protection.

Remember that seat belts are designed for adults, not children. To keep safe, older children should use a seat belt with a booster seat. Booster cushions are better than nothing at all, but a high backed booster seat offers the best protection for your child.

A quick guide to child car seats

i-Size	Based on a child's height.		
Rear-facing i-Size	Use until at least 15 months.		
type of seat	group	weight of child	approx age
rear-facing baby seat	0+*	up to 13kg	birth to 12-15 months
forward-facing child seat	I	9-18kg	9 months (stable when sitting) to 3-4 years
booster seat	II and III	15-36kg	from 3-4 years upwards
* Group 0 seats are not now readily available.			

Buying your baby or child car seat

Buying second-hand seats is not recommended. They may have been damaged in an accident, but you won't necessarily be able to tell by looking at them. If you do use a second-hand seat, try to make sure you know its history, have the manufacturer's instructions and check that there is no damage and no parts are missing.

Not every seat will fit properly in every car. Try the seat in your car before you buy it, or check the returns policy. Make sure it can be fitted exactly to the manufacturer's instructions. The seat should be secure. If it wobbles it is either wrongly fitted or not suitable for your car. If your car has ISOFIX attachments, consider buying an ISOFIX seat.

Do not choose a seat that is difficult to fit. If it is awkward it may be tempting not to bother with it on short journeys. It is vital that you use your child car seat on every journey – most accidents happen within a short distance of home.

Make sure the seat you buy fits in the back – it is safer for your child to travel in the back seat of the car if possible.