

# Booster Seats

## What is a booster seat?

A booster seat is a car seat without a harness. It raises a child up so the lap and shoulder belt fit right. Children use a booster seat when they are too big for a car seat but not big enough for an adult seat belt. A seat belt that doesn't fit right won't protect your child in a crash.

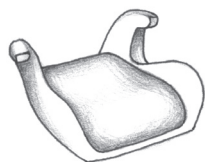
## When will my child be ready for a booster seat?

Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a 5-point harness until they reach the top height or upper weight limit allowed for that car seat (check the manufacturer's instructions). Once they outgrow their forward-facing car seat, they can ride in a booster seat. Your child should be at least 40 pounds before they use a booster seat.

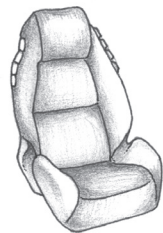
In Washington state, it is the law for children to ride in a booster seat until they are 4 feet, 9 inches tall (57 inches). Most kids will need a booster seat until they are 10 to 12. Children under age 13 should ride in the back seat when possible.

## What kinds of booster seats are there?

- A **no-back booster** can be used in cars with headrests in the back seat. If your child's head does not rest comfortably in the headrest to protect their head and neck, then use a high-back booster seat.
- A **high-back booster** can be used in cars with or without headrests.



No-back booster



High-back booster



## How do I install a booster seat?

Both kinds of booster seats must be used with a lap and shoulder belt. Never use one with just a lap-only belt. Read the vehicle owner's manual and the booster seat manual before installing the seat. Boosters are easier to install than other car seats.

## Are booster seats needed for short rides?

Yes! Make sure that your child uses their booster seat on every trip. This includes carpools and when using ride share services. Accidents can and do happen on short rides.

### To Learn More

- [800buckleup.org](http://800buckleup.org), 425-828-8975 or 800-282-5587
- [boosterseat.org](http://boosterseat.org)
- [safecar.gov](http://safecar.gov)
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)
- Your child's healthcare provider

Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call Marketing Communications at 206-987-5323.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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