

# Car Seat Options for Children with Behavior Challenges

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Driving with your child may take extra planning if they have a disability or behavior challenges that make it hard to keep them buckled. Specialized car seats and other resources may help.

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## Getting a car seat evaluation for your child

Occupational therapists (OT) at Seattle Children's Hospital can do a car seat evaluation with your child. They can:

- Assess your child's needs in the car, make recommendations and give other tips.
- Work with you to see which seat and options are best for your child.
- Write a letter to request insurance coverage for a specialized car seat or vest if regular car seats do not work for your child. They can help find a medical distributor and place the order for you.

Ask your child's primary care provider or Seattle Children's provider for a referral to an OT at Seattle Children's for a "car seat evaluation" if you think this would be helpful.

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## Getting help with behavior challenges in the car

- There are some occupational and behavioral therapists in the community who can provide help with challenging behaviors in the car.
  - You can call the Seattle Children's OT/PT clinic and ask for their list of community clinics that provide services for children with autism.
  - If your child gets applied behavior analysis or other therapy, ask the therapist if you can get help with challenging behaviors in the car.
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## Specialized car seats and vests

A specialized car seat or vest may help some children with behavior challenges such as escaping from the car seat. These seats can be purchased directly or may be provided by insurance after a car seat evaluation. Options include:



### Roosevelt Car Seat

- Designed for children 35 to 115 pounds and 33.5 to 62 inches tall
- Includes anti-escape accessories
- Visit [merrittcarseat.com/rooseveltcarseat](http://merrittcarseat.com/rooseveltcarseat)

### To Learn More

- Autism  
206-987-8080
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



### E-Z-On Vest with Zipper Back

- A vest that opens in the back
- For children who weigh 31 to 168 pounds
- May be an alternative for children who have outgrown a large, specialized car seat
- A good option for vehicles that have limited space for a large, specialized car seat
- Your child must have good head and trunk control to use this harness
- [ezonpro.com/our-products/transportation-vests/adjustable-zipper-vest](http://ezonpro.com/our-products/transportation-vests/adjustable-zipper-vest)



### Recaro Monza Nova

- Special needs booster seat designed for children 33 to 110 pounds
- 5-point positioning harness
- Has many accessory options for sensory sensitive children, including integrated speakers in the headrest, seat extension, table and soft harness strap covers
- [thomashilfen.us/recaro-monza-nova-2-reha](http://thomashilfen.us/recaro-monza-nova-2-reha)



### Churchill Booster Seat

- Backless booster seat for children or adults weighing 65 to 175 pounds.
- The booster seat includes a positioning harness, buckle guard and chest clip guard designed to prevent releasing the buckles.
- [merrittcarseat.com/churchillcarseat/](http://merrittcarseat.com/churchillcarseat/)

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## Car seats for larger children

There are regular car seats on the market that fit larger children including:

- Convertible seats with rear-facing limits up to 50 pounds.
- Forward-facing seats with weight limits up to 90 pounds. These include convertible seats, combination seats or forward facing only seats. Staying in a forward-facing car seat can be helpful for children who cannot not stay buckled in a booster.
- Booster seats with a weight limit up to 125 pounds. Staying in a booster may be helpful for children who respond well to having side support.

You may need to try a variety of car seats to see which works best for you and your child.

In a rear or forward-facing car seat (not a booster), consider using the lower anchor system if your child is unbuckling the vehicle seat belt. Be sure to check that your child is within the weight limits to use lower anchors. This is 65 pounds or less and includes the weight of the car seat.

To find a list of these car seats with price, weight and height limits, visit [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org), click on “On the Go” and choose “Car Seats: Product Listing” for the current year.

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### Does insurance cover car seats or vests?

- Insurance may cover specialized car seats or vests. They **do not** cover regular car seats.
  - Coverage depends on your insurance provider. Getting approval can take time. Planning for when your child grows with your OT can give you enough time to navigate this process.
  - An OT or primary care provider can write a letter of medical necessity, required by many insurance companies for approval of coverage for a specialized car seat or vest.
  - If you live in Washington state, and your child has autism, you may be able to apply for financial assistance to help pay for a regular or specialized car seat. You can apply at Ben’s Fund through FEAT of Washington. Visit [featwa.org/bens-fund](http://featwa.org/bens-fund).
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### Escape proof products

- Merritt manufacturing makes products to help keep kids from unbuckling a car seat at [escapeproof.com](http://escapeproof.com).
  - The Roosevelt car seat includes anti-escape accessories. Visit [merrittcarseat.com/rooseveltcarseat](http://merrittcarseat.com/rooseveltcarseat).
  - The Churchill booster seat includes a buckle guard and chest clip guard designed to prevent releasing the buckles. Visit [merrittcarseat.com/churchillcarseat](http://merrittcarseat.com/churchillcarseat).
  - There are several products on the market designed to deter children from releasing their seat belt, such as Angel Guard, Buckle Boss and BuckleRoo Seat Belt Buckle Guard. There are no federal regulations for these types of products and car seat makers do not crash test using these products. There is no way of knowing if these products would be effective or alter car seat performance in any way during a crash.
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### Websites and resources

- If you need help finding a car seat that fits your child, using lowering anchors or installing your child’s car seat, a Child Passenger Safety Technician may be able to help. Find a technician near you by visiting [cert.safekids.org](http://cert.safekids.org). Click on “Find a Tech” or call 1-877-366-8154. You can click on the box to filter for a technician with special needs training in the “find a tech” section.
  - Find special needs transportation information at the National Center for the Safe Transportation of Children with Special Health Care Needs. [preventinjury.pediatrics.iu.edu/special-needs](http://preventinjury.pediatrics.iu.edu/special-needs) or 800-755-0912.
  - Find information, support and resource on safety for your child with autism at [awaare.nationalautismassociation.org](http://awaare.nationalautismassociation.org) and [autismsafety.org](http://autismsafety.org).
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