

Finding the RIGHT Safety Restraint for Your Tween



A TWEEN SAFETY RESTRAINT INITIATIVE
Created by Safe Communities and funded by a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

What You Need to Know

Use a booster seat with the vehicle lap and shoulder safety belts until your child passes the Safety Belt Fit Test. Take the next step to the safety belt when you answer “yes” to these questions:

Does your child exceed the booster seat’s height and weight limits?

Does your child pass the **Safety Belt Fit Test** in all vehicles used?

1 Have your child sit all the way back on the vehicle seat. Do his or her knees bend at the front edge of the seat? If they bend naturally, go to #2. If they don’t, return to the booster seat.

2 Buckle the lap and shoulder belt. Be sure the lap belt rests on the upper legs or hips. If it does, go to #3. If it rests on the stomach, return to the booster seat.

3 Be sure the shoulder belt rests on the shoulder or collarbone. If it does, go to #4. If it’s on the face or neck, return to the booster seat. Never put the shoulder belt under the child’s arm or behind the child’s back.

4 Check whether your child maintains the correct seating position for as long as you are in the car. If your child slouches or shifts positions so the safety belt touches the face, neck or stomach, return your child to the booster seat.

40 to 80 or 100 pounds

Use a booster seat correctly in a back seat every time your child rides in a car. Older kids get weighed and measured less often than babies, so check your child’s growth a few times a year. Use a booster seat until your child weighs between 80 and 100 pounds, is about 4’9” tall and can pass the Safety Belt Fit Test. For most children, that will be between ages 8 and 12.

Inform all drivers who transport your child that booster seat use is a must when your child is in their vehicle. A booster seat uses no harness. It uses the vehicle’s lap and shoulder belts only. Be sure the safety belt is properly buckled.

Use the vehicle’s lap and shoulder belts on every booster seat. Never place the shoulder belt under the child’s arm or behind the child’s back.

Be sure all occupants wear safety belts correctly every time. Children learn from adult role models.

For Parents

Many parents are surprised to learn that safety belts generally do NOT fit children until they are between 8 and 12 years of age. Booster seats, used after children outgrow car seats with harnesses, are needed until that time.

Question: How can you know if your child (or the child you transport) is big enough to use the safety belt?

Answer: Use the Safety Belt Fit Test on every child under 13 you transport. Remember too, that all children under age 13 should ride properly restrained in a back seat.

Remember - Car seats and booster seats are designed to protect children and make them comfortable at the same time. There’s nothing comfortable about a too-big safety belt cutting into a child’s stomach or pressing against his face. Plus, kids who ride on booster seats can easily see many things they would otherwise miss.

Source: SAFEKIDS USA www.safekids.org

