



Child Car Seats



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Choosing and Using Child Seats

The most important thing is to make sure that the seat you choose is suitable for your child and for your car. If you use the child seat in more than one car, follow the advice below for each car.

Before You Buy

Don't rush the decision. Look through the manufacturer's catalogues, or on their websites or in shops that sell child seats to assess a range of seats.

Think about how you will use the seat. For example, if you will be constantly taking it in and out of the car, a lighter weight seat might be preferable. Or, if you do a lot of long journeys, a seat that reclines may be more comfortable for your child and help him or her sleep.

Choose a seat that is suitable for your child's weight and height.

Babies should be in rearward-facing baby seats. Do not move your child to a forward-facing seat until they weigh at least 9 kgs and can sit up unaided, but keep them in a rearward-facing seat for as long as possible. Once your child is above the maximum weight for a rearward-facing seat or the top of their head is above the top of the seat, they should be moved into a forward-facing seat. It is not important if their knees are bent in the seat, provided they are still within the seat's weight range.

Contact the child seat manufacturer to check if the seat will fit your car. If you are considering a Britax seat, you can enter the details of the seat and your car on their "Fit Finder" website if it fits your car and the best position.

When Buying

Ask the retailer if the child seat is suitable for your child and car. Try to find a retailer who will let you (or even better, help you) try the seat in your car before you buy it.

If this is not possible, make sure that you can return the seat if it is not suitable, and replace it or get a refund.

Avoid buying a child seat by mail order, unless you are sure that it will fit your car.

Check that the seat meets the United Nations standard Regulation 44.03 - look for the 'E' mark.



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Do not buy a second-hand seat, you cannot be certain of its history (it may have been involved in an accident and been seriously weakened - the damage may not be visible) and often the instructions are missing. Second-hand seats are likely to be older and not designed to current standards.

Only accept a child seat from a family member or friend, if you are absolutely certain that you know its history, it comes with the original instructions and it is not too old.



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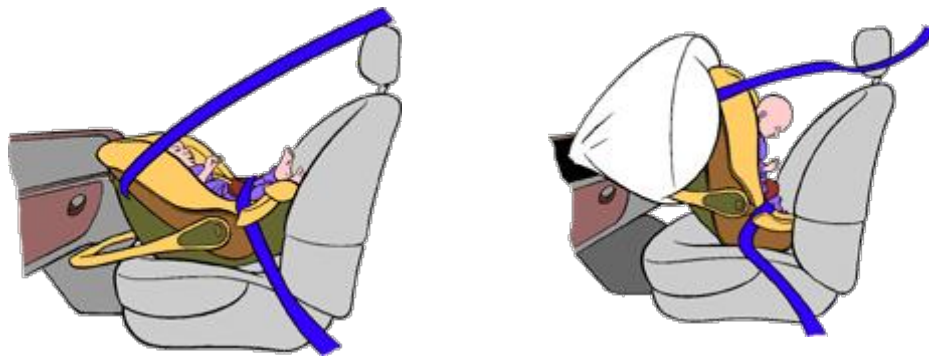
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Fitting Child Seats

If you use the child seat in more than one car, follow the advice below for each car.

It's safer to fit child seats in the rear of the car, but if necessary they can be fitted in the front. But, **NEVER** fit a rearward-facing baby seat in the front if there is an airbag on the passenger side of the car. If the airbag went off it would strike the seat with considerable force.



Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for fitting the seat. If you have lost the instructions, contact the child seat manufacturer to check if they can provide a copy.

Make sure the seatbelt passes through all the correct guides on the child seat. Some seats have an alternative routing if the seat belt is too short to go around the main route.

Push your weight into the child seat as you tighten the seat belt to make sure the child seat is securely held. There should be no slack in the seat belt.



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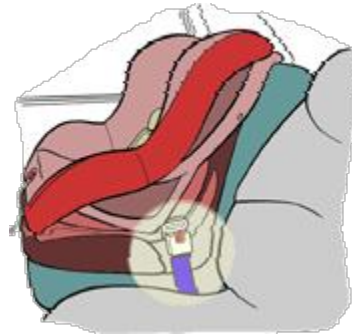
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The child seat should rest firmly on the car seat, with hardly any forwards or sideways movement.



Check that the seatbelt buckle is not resting on the child seat frame (this is known as 'buckle crunch').

Keep the fitting instructions with the child seat in the car.

If you are unsure about anything, seek advice and if possible get someone to check the fitting of child seat for you. If you have a Britax seat, you can enter the details of the seat and your car on their "Fit Finder" website for advice on the best position to fit it.

Never modify the seat or adult seatbelt to make it fit.

If you are fitting a forward-facing child seat in the front of a car, make sure the car seat is as far back as it will go, so the child is as far as possible from the dashboard. This reduces the possibility of head or chest injuries in a crash.

If you take the child seat out of the car, make sure you fit it properly every time you put it back in. If it stays in the car permanently, check it regularly to make sure it is still securely held.

Using Child Seats

It should go without saying, that your child should use the child seat for every single journey, no matter how short.

- Take time to get the child comfortably strapped in.
- Make sure the seat's harness (if it has one) is correctly adjusted for your child. It should be quite tight, so that only one or two fingers can fit between the child's chest and harness.
- Clothing can affect how snugly the harness fits, so check it every journey.
- The harness buckle should not rest over the child's tummy.



If you are using a booster seat or cushion, the adult seatbelt restrains both the child and the seat or cushion. Make sure that:

- the belt is worn as tight as possible
- the lap belt goes over the pelvic region (from hip-bone to hip-bone), not the stomach
- the diagonal strap rests on the child's shoulder, not the neck (some seats have a clip to help position the belt).
- Never tuck the seatbelt under the child's arm or behind their back.

Some children go through a phase of slipping out of the harness or releasing the buckle. But do not modify the buckle to prevent this, you might affect the quick release mechanism.

ALWAYS SET A GOOD EXAMPLE BY WEARING YOUR SEAT BELT