

## PURPOSE OF A BOOSTER SEAT

A booster raises a child so that the adult seat belt is properly positioned over his or her body. A child must be at least 18 kg (40 lb.) to use a booster seat. Don't be in a hurry to move a child to a booster. It is safer for a child to use a 5 pt. harness as long as possible. Most new models of car seats allow a child to be harnessed up to 30 kg (65 lb.).

Booster seats have upper weight limits of 45 to 54.5 kg (100-120 lb.) allowing children up to 12 years-of-age to travel safely. Until 9-12 years-of-age, a child's pelvis is underdeveloped, making it difficult to maintain correct lap belt positioning over the upper thighs. If a child's thighs are shorter than the vehicle seat cushion, this will promote slouching, causing the lap belt to ride up over the abdomen. If the lap belt rides up onto a child's abdomen, there is a risk of serious internal injury or spinal damage in a crash.



To fit most shoulder belts, both safely and comfortably, a child needs to be at least 1.45 m (4 ft. 9 in.) tall or have a sitting height of 74 cm (29 in.). *The shoulder belt should never be tucked under a child's arm.* In a collision, the force of the shoulder belt in this position could break ribs, which, in turn, could damage vital organs. *The shoulder belt should never be put behind a child's back.* Then, the upper body is unrestrained and the lap belt may rise above the hip bones, which could cause severe or fatal abdominal injuries.



A booster seat will also raise a child so that he or she can see out the window. This is, in fact, a safety issue - a happy child makes a better passenger, and is less likely to fuss and distract the driver.

A child has outgrown the booster when he or she reaches the upper weight [45 to 54.5 kg (100 to 120 lb.), depending on the model], **or** upper height limit, or when the top of the ears is above the vehicle seat back, headrest or high back booster.

## WHAT IS AVAILABLE?

All children are safest in the back seat. While the centre position, rear seat, is preferred, it must have a lap/shoulder belt. If only a lap belt is present, then one of the side seating positions must be used. Currently, there isn't a booster available that can be used with a lap belt alone.



When using a booster seat, it is important that your child has proper head and neck support. With a Backless Booster, if the top of your child's ears is above the top of the vehicle seat or the vehicle head rest, he or she could be injured. If this is the case, a High Back Booster which is designed to be taller than the vehicle seat, should be used.

**Backless Booster** - Backless Boosters are hard seats with two arms or guides, to keep the belt from sliding upward in a collision. They are used with a lap & shoulder belt. Most models have adjustable straps to help position the shoulder belt correctly.



**High Back Booster** - High Back Boosters are used with a lap & shoulder belt, never a lap belt alone. They usually have a positioner or guide for shoulder belt comfort. Some models can provide head support, which is important if the vehicle seat back is low. Some high back boosters have adjustable backs that can 'grow' with the child. In some models, the back comes off and it becomes a backless booster.

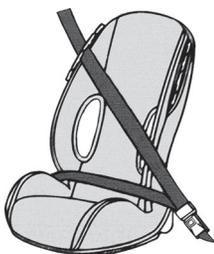


### Choose a booster seat that fits your child until:

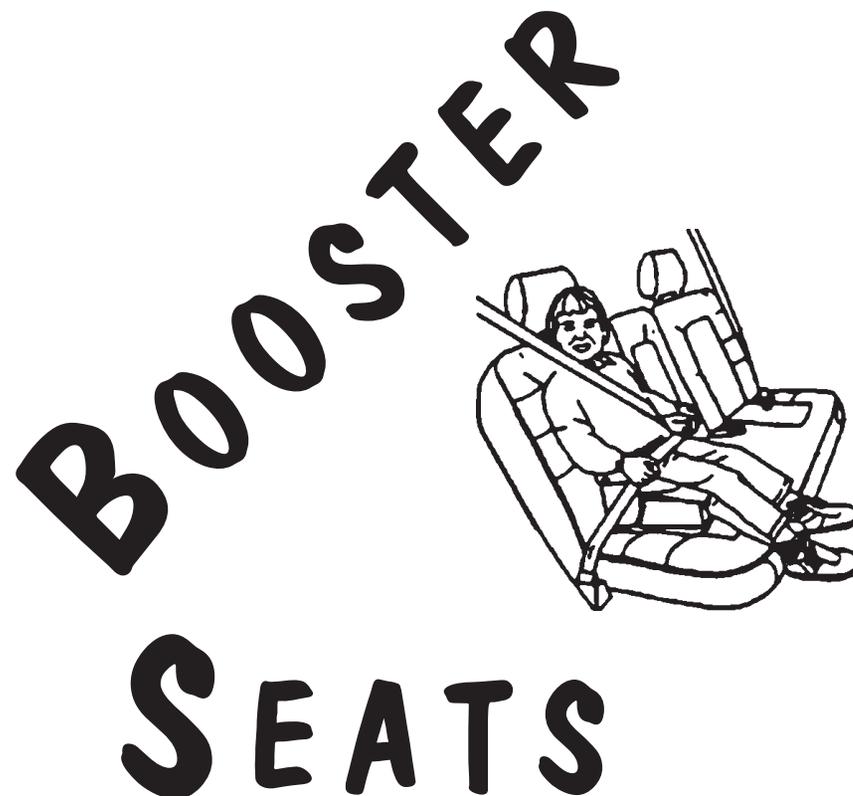
- ✓ he or she is 9-12 years-of-age,
- ✓ he or she is at least 1.45 m (4 ft. 9 in.) tall or has a sitting height of 74 cm (29 in.),
- ✓ his or her knees bend comfortably over the edge of the seat, with feet flat on the floor, when sitting back against the vehicle seat,
- ✓ the lap belt rests across the upper thighs,
- ✓ the shoulder belt is centred on the shoulder and chest, **and**
- ✓ your child can stay seated like this for the whole trip.

## REMEMBER

- ♥ Booster seats, like car seats, must be put in your vehicle correctly. It is important that you always follow the instructions for *your* booster seat and vehicle. Make sure that the seat belt is snug.
- ♥ Encourage your child to sit up straight. A child slumped over the side of a booster could be injured in a sudden stop or crash.
- ♥ Using pillows, cushions, blankets, etc. instead of a booster seat in a vehicle is dangerous. In a collision, they will compress, creating slack in the seat belt. The seat belt could then ride up on the child's abdomen, or the child could fly out of the belt altogether.
- ♥ Add-on shoulder belt positioning devices which attach to both the lap and shoulder belt are not recommended for children or adults. There are no regulations governing the production or design of these products. They can change the geometry of the seat belt, pulling the lap belt up, onto the abdomen. Crash tests, done in the U.S., have shown that they *increase* the likelihood of injury or death in a crash. ITSA recommends that these devices *not* be used. (Shoulder belt height adjusters and comfort clips, available on some newer vehicles, are acceptable.)
- ♥ Remember to fasten in the booster, even when your child is not in it. During a sudden stop, an empty, unbelted booster seat could fly around the vehicle causing injury to the driver or passengers. A number of new Boosters can be used with UAS. Check your instructions.



## Infant & Toddler Safety Association



For more information, go to our website: [www.infantandtoddlersafety.ca](http://www.infantandtoddlersafety.ca)

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