

## How to Choose a Booster Seat for Your Child

### What is a booster seat?

A booster seat is a firm cushion of foam or plastic that lifts the child up in the car to improve the position and angle of the shoulder belt. (If there are no shoulder belts in the back seat of your car, skip to the last two paragraphs at the bottom of this page.) There should be slots or hooks for the lap belt to keep it low, on the child's hips and thighs. There are backless, highback, and removable-back boosters. Most boosters include a shoulder belt guide or comfort clip that can be used, if necessary, to pull the shoulder belt slightly downward so it crosses the center of the shoulder and chest.

### Choosing the best booster for your child

The ideal booster has a removable back with an adjustable headrest. Be sure to use the backrest if the vehicle seatback is too low to protect your child from neck injuries in a rear collision. To provide head support for neck protection, the top of the vehicle seatback, booster, or headrest should be at or above the child's ears. An adjustable headrest helps keep a sleeping child positioned properly under the vehicle belt and positions the shoulder belt comfortably without preventing it from retracting properly. Backless boosters are lightweight and less expensive, which makes them convenient for carpooling and play dates. They work well as long as the child is able to sit upright throughout the trip and the head is supported by the vehicle seatback. For family vacations, a backless booster can be used in the car on the way to the airport and at the destination if it is packed in a carry-on bag. (Boosters may not be used on aircraft.) Combination seats, which are often marketed as "highback boosters," have a harness that can be used from 20-30 pounds up to 40-50 pounds, then removed to convert the seat to a booster (see cautions in next section).

### How to tell if a booster fits

Try the booster with your child in your car(s). Make sure the lap belt is positioned low, touching the child's thighs and hips, and the shoulder belt crosses the middle of the child's shoulder, touching the chest.

Cautions: Some highback boosters and combination seats have high sides that hold the lap belt too high, which may allow the child to "submarine" (slide downward and forward) in a crash. They may also have a plastic shoulder belt guide, or "comfort clip," attached to the side of the backrest that grips the shoulder belt tightly. This type of clip could prevent the belt from retracting properly after the child leans forward or pulls on the belt, resulting in dangerous slack. If the shoulder belt fits properly, do not use the clip. If the clip is needed to keep the belt from crossing the neck or face, supervise the child very closely or select a different model.

### When a booster should not be used

If your car does not have shoulder belts in the back seat, a booster seat cannot be used. You may be able to have shoulder belts installed in an older car for the outboard (side) seating positions. Check with your vehicle dealer or call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. for a list of shoulder belt retrofit kits available from vehicle manufacturers (#640 at [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org)). If a retrofit kit is not available, consider installing a harness\* to protect older children and adults in the back seat. If your child is too large for a typical safety seat with its own harness and is under 3-4 years old or extremely active, he or she is probably not ready to sit still in a lap and shoulder belt with a booster. You need a larger seat or a travel vest to keep the child properly seated and secured (see list below).

### Products for seating positions with no shoulder belts or for large children under age 3-4

Britax Boulevard, Decathlon, Marathon or Wizard (5-65 lbs.); Britax Husky (22-80 lbs.); Combi-Nania Airway (harness fits up to 50 lbs.; remove harness to use as booster); E-Z-On Vest or harnesses (various sizes available; tether required); Ride Ryte Booster (may be used with E-Z-On harnesses); Ride Safer Travel Vest (35-60 lbs. with lap-only belt and tether).

(See other side for a list of boosters)

<b>SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.</b> P.O. Box 553, Altadena, CA 91003 <a href="http://www.carseat.org">www.carseat.org</a> 310/222-6860, 800/745-SAFE (English)      310/222-6862, 800/747-SANO (Spanish)
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## **Belt-Positioning Booster Seats**

No internal harness. Must be used with vehicle lap and shoulder belts. Child should be at least 3-4 years old and able to stay seated with the belts properly positioned. Recommend not using belt guide unless shoulder belt is scraping child's neck.

### **Belt-Positioning Boosters with Adjustable Headrest**

Recommended for best positioning of shoulder belt, to keep sleeping child placed properly in belt, and for head support in vehicles with low seatback.

<b>Manufacturer</b>	<b>Model Name</b>	<b>Child's Wt.</b>	<b>Features</b>
Britax	Bodyguard	40-100	Back not removable
Britax	Parkway	No wt. limit. See features.	Back not removable. Child must be 38-60 inches tall.
Britax	Starriser Comfy	30-80	Also available without backrest
Combi-Strolee	Saratoga	33-100	May be used without backrest
Compass	B500 Booster	30-100	Folds up for storage
Dorel-Cosco	Protek	30-100	May be used without backrest
Dorel-Safety 1st	High Rider	30-100	May be used without backrest
Evenflo	Big Kid	30-100	May be used without backrest
Graco	Turbo	30-100	Also available without backrest

### **Belt-Positioning Booster Compatible with Add-On Harness**

Safety Angel	Ride Ryte	30-80 with backrest, 40-80 w/o backrest. Use with lap-shoulder belt or E-Z-On Kid Y with tether for cars or KidCam for buses.	
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**Backless Boosters** – Acceptable if child's head is supported by vehicle seatback.

<b>Manufacturer</b>	<b>Model Name</b>	<b>Child's Weight</b>
Combi	Everest	33-100
Combi-Strolee	HighRide, McKinley	33-80
Dorel-Cosco	Highrise, Ambassador, Auto Booster	33-80
Evenflo	Right Fit	40-80
ProRider	CNS Booster	33-80

**Highback, Belt-Positioning Boosters** – Back is not removable. Do not use if shoulder belt is not touching child's shoulder and chest or lap belt is not touching top of child's thighs. Caution: if child leans forward, make sure belt guide does not prevent the shoulder belt from retracting properly to take out the slack.

<b>Manufacturer</b>	<b>Model Name</b>	<b>Child's Weight</b>
Baby Trend	Booster	30-80
Dorel-Cosco	Traveler, Complete Voyager	30-80
Evenflo	Sightseer	30-80
Graco	My CarGo	30-80
Jupiter Industries	Komfort Kruiser	33-100
LaRoche Bros.	Grizzly Bear	40-95
LaRoche Bros.	Polar Bear	30-100
LaRoche Bros.	Teddy Bear	30-80
Recaro	Start	30-80