The Australian and New Zealand Standard: AS/NZS 1754

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If all back seats are being used by children aged under 7 years, children aged 4 years to under 7 years may travel in the front seat, provided they use a booster seat. In this situation you will need to use a booster seat that is manufactured without a tether strap.

If your car does not have a rear row (for example, a ute) children are able to travel in the front row. However, a rearward facing child restraint cannot be used in the front seat where there is a passenger airbag. Although airbags are a proven safety feature that can prevent serious injuries in the event of a crash, they are designed and tested for adult use and there is a small chance that children can be injured from the force of an airbag.

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Choosing and using the safest restraint for your child

This brochure has information about:
- choosing the safest restraint for your child
- the Australian standard for child restraints
- restraints for children with additional needs.

It is the law that all children under 16 years of age, when travelling in a motor vehicle in Victoria, must be restrained in a suitable restraint that is properly adjusted and fastened.

The type of restraint will depend on the child’s age and size.

Child restraints and booster seats used in Victoria must comply with the Australian/New Zealand Standard 1754 for child restraints.

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Children from birth

By law, a child aged under 6 months must travel in a rearward facing child restraint. Every child is unique and develops at different rates so when a child reaches 6 months of age it does not necessarily mean that they are ready to be placed in a forward facing child restraint. Wait until the child has outgrown their rearward facing restraint before you turn it around.

All rearward facing child restraints must be held in place by the seatbelt AND the top tether strap, and MUST have an inbuilt harness.

Many child restraints are convertible and can be turned around and used as a forward facing child restraint when the child is between 6 and 12 months of age. However, there are child restraints on the market that allow children to remain in rear facing child restraints until they are 2-3 years old.

Children aged 6 months to under 4 years

A child aged 6 months to under 4 years must travel in either a rearward facing or forward facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness. The type of restraint will depend on the child’s size.

All forward facing child restraints MUST be held in place by the seatbelt OR ISOFIX attachments AND the top tether strap, and must have an inbuilt harness. There are now forward facing child restraints available on the Australian market with an inbuilt harness for children up to approximately 8 years of age.

Many forward facing child restraints can be used as a booster seat by removing the inbuilt harness. This type of restraint is often called a combination restraint.

Only move your child from a forward facing child restraint to a booster seat when they have outgrown their forward facing child restraint.

Children aged 4 years to under 7 years

A child aged 4 years to under 7 years must travel in either a forward facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness, or a booster seat. The type of restraint will depend on the child’s size.

All forward facing child restraints MUST be held in place by the seatbelt AND the top tether strap, and must have an inbuilt harness. Many forward facing child restraints can be used as a booster seat by removing the inbuilt harness. This type of restraint is often called a combination restraint.

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Only move your child to a booster seat when they have outgrown their forward facing child restraint.

A booster seat can be used with a lap sash seatbelt and may or may not have a top tether strap. Refer to the restraint manufacturer’s instructions.

Seatbelt readiness

Children aged 7 years to under 16 years must travel in either a forward facing child restraint, a booster seat or an adult seatbelt.

An adult lap-sash seatbelt is designed for people with a minimum height of 145 cm. The average child will reach this height between 10 and 12 years of age.

A child should continue using a forward facing child restraint or booster seat until they have outgrown it.

The “5 Step Test” can help determine if a child is ready to move out of a child restraint or booster seat and use an adult seatbelt.

The child should be able to:
1. Sit with their back against the seat back
2. Bend their knees comfortably over the front of the seat cushion
3. Sit with the sash belt across their mid-shoulder
4. Sit with the lap belt across the top of their thighs
5. Remain in this position for the whole trip.
Choosing and using the safest restraint for your child

This brochure has information about:

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Only move your child from a rearward facing child restraint to a booster seat when they have outgrown their forward facing child restraint.

Children aged 4 years to under 7 years

A child aged 4 years to under 7 years must travel in either a forward facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness, or a booster seat. The type of restraint will depend on the child’s size.

All forward facing child restraints MUST be held in place by the seatbelt AND the top tether strap, and must have an inbuilt harness.

Many forward facing child restraints can be used as a booster seat by removing the inbuilt harness. This type of restraint is often called a combination restraint. Only move your child to a booster seat when they have outgrown their forward facing child restraint.

A booster seat can be used with a lap sash seatbelt and may or may not have a top tether strap. Refer to the restraint manufacturer’s instructions.

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A child should continue using a forward facing child restraint until they have outgrown it. The "5 Step Test" can help determine if a child is ready to move out of a child restraint or booster seat and use an adult seatbelt.

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1. Sit with their back against the seat back
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Front and back seats

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