

Safety Article



The Utah Safety Council cares about your safety outside of the work setting. We offer resources that keep you and your loved ones safe at home, at play and on the go.

CAR SEATS AND OBESE CHILDREN: SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Parents of obese and overweight children often worry about how they can safely transport their children in car seats. Appropriate restraint use for tall and/or heavy children can be a challenge. To meet the needs of larger children, car seat manufacturers have developed many seats that fit children to higher weights and heights, including rear-facing and forward-facing seats and belt-positioning booster seats. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) supports this progress and the regulatory changes that ensure those higher-capacity seats provide the best possible protection to children.

For parents who are unsure how to safely transport a large child, the AAP offers the following reminders and suggestions:

- All children, of any age or size, must be properly restrained when riding in a motor vehicle. This means that:
 - Children 12 years and younger should ride in the back seat.
 - Infants and toddlers should ride in rear-facing car seats as long as possible, or at least until age 2.
 - Toddlers and young children who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their seats should ride in forward-facing car seats with harnesses as long as possible.
 - School age children who have outgrown their car seats with harnesses should ride in booster seats until the adult seat belt fits properly, usually between 8 and 12 years of age. This means that the lap belt fits low across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt crosses the middle of the chest and shoulder.

For more information on how to decide when your child is ready to move to the next type of car seat or into the adult seat belt, read this [car seat guide](#).

- Never use a car seat if your child weighs more than the seat's weight limit or is taller than the height limit. Check the labels on the seat or manufacturer's instructions if you are unsure what the limits are.
- The "best" car seat is the one that fits your child, that fits your vehicle, and that you will use correctly for every trip. If you need help finding a car seat that fits your larger child, a Child Passenger Safety Technician may be able to help. You can find a Technician near you by visiting seatcheck.org or calling the toll-free 866.SEAT.CHECK (1.866.732.8243).
- Car safety seat manufacturers increasingly are making car seats that fit larger children. [Click here for a list of available car seats](#). These include:
 - Convertible seats with rear-facing weight limits up to 40 to 50 pounds
 - Forward-facing seats with harnesses (convertible seats, combination seats, or forward-facing only seats) with an upper weight limit of 50 to 90 pounds
 - Booster seats with a maximum weight limit of 100 to 125 pounds

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For toddlers or young children whose behavior will not yet allow safe use of a booster seat but who are too large for a forward-facing seat with a harness, you can consider using a travel vest. A list of travel vests is available in our car seat guide. Most travel vests have upper weight limits of 60 to 168 pounds.

Additional Information:

- [Car Seats: Information for Families](#)
- [Car Seats: Product Listing](#)
- [Car Seat Checkup](#)
- [Where We Stand: Car Seats For Children](#)

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics