



give
your kid a
Boost!

Facts
About
Car Seat
Safety





From the Executive Director

Road safety is important for all Canadians, but when it comes to child passenger safety, the numbers really hit home. Car crashes are the leading cause of injury-related death for Canadian children under the age of 14. The good news is that when children are placed in the appropriate car seat for their stage of development, they are well protected and less likely to be severely injured. We all have a role to play in making our children safe. Parents and caregivers can choose the right car seat or booster seat for their child and make sure it is used for every single ride. Governments can protect children by enacting booster seat legislation for their province or territory and police can enforce legislation. All of these actions make it possible to protect children and give them the 'boost' they need to be safe on every ride.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'P. Fuselli'.

Pamela Fuselli
Executive Director

Issue

Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of injury-related death for Canadian children. According to Transport Canada, on average a staggering 3,500 are injured, while another 61 children are killed each year – the equivalent of two elementary school classrooms.(1)

.....
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.....

By working together,
we can significantly **reduce these numbers.**

Here's how:

- Parents can reduce the risk of injury and death by using the appropriate car seat for their child's size and using it correctly.
- Provinces can enforce existing car restraint legislation and enact booster seat legislation in provinces and territories that do not currently have it.
- Government can improve survival rates and reduce injury by increasing investment in child passenger safety.

When crashes do happen, steps must be taken to reduce the risk of injury. A comprehensive approach that incorporates legislation, enforcement, education campaigns and design can protect and reduce the risk of injury to children in motor vehicles.

act now.

↓
According to the data on severe injuries to child passengers:

.....
92 per cent of injured infants

.....
74 per cent of injured toddlers

.....
96 per cent of injured school-aged children

.....
were not using the appropriate restraint at the time of a car crash.

(4)

Solution

Using the right kind of car seat for a child's stage of development.

When installed correctly, putting a child in the appropriate restraint for their stage of physical development can reduce their risk of injury or death significantly, by as much as 74 per cent.(2, 3)

.....
When installed
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much as
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.....

Children should move through four stages of child restraints in vehicles:

- Rear-facing car seat until at least 22 pounds (10 kg)
- Forward-facing car seat until at least 40 pounds (18 kg)
- Booster seat until at least four feet nine inches tall (145 cm) and 80 pounds (36 kg)
- Seat belt after a minimum height of four feet nine inches tall (145 cm)

The longer a child stays in each car seat stage, the better protected they are. A child should remain in car seat stage until they have outgrown the height or weight limitations of the model they are using. Parents should check the manual for this information. Rushing a child prematurely from one stage to the next jeopardizes their level of protection.



Provinces and Territories that DO NOT currently have Booster seat legislation in place:

Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba,
Yukon, Northwest Territories and
Nunavut.

Booster Seat Legislation Chart

CANADA : Provincial and Territorial Booster Seat Legislation

Province/Territory	Booster Seat Legislation for Older Children
British Columbia (Motor Vehicle Act, Division 36)	Effective July 1, 2008 Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4 feet, 9 inches (145 cm) tall, or a minimum of 9 years old.
Ontario (Highway Traffic Act s.106)	Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4 feet, 9 inches (145 cm) tall, or a minimum of 80 pounds (36 kg), or a minimum of 8 years old.
Quebec (Highway Safety Code s.397)	Children must ride in a booster seat until they have a minimum seated height (measured from the seat to the top of the head) of 25 inches (63 cm). Follow manufacturer's recommendations for seat type, weight and height requirements for your child.
New Brunswick (Motor Vehicle Act - Seat Belt Section)	Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4 feet, 9 inches (145 cm) tall, or a minimum of 80 pounds (36 kg), or a minimum of 9 years old.
Nova Scotia (Motor Vehicle Act)	Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4 feet, 9 inches (145 cm) tall, or a minimum of 9 years old.
Prince Edward Island (Highway Traffic Act - Seat Belt Regulations)	Children must ride in a booster seat if they are over 40 pounds (18 kg). * They must ride in a booster seat until they are 4 feet, 9 inches (145 cm) tall, or a minimum of 10 years old. *Maximum weight based on booster seat manufacturer's recommendations.
Newfoundland and Labrador (Highway Traffic Act)	Effective July 1, 2008 Children must ride in a booster seat until they are a minimum of 4 feet, 9 inches (145 cm) tall, or a minimum of 80 pounds (36 kg), or a minimum of 8 years old.

*For information purposes only. Please consult local authorities for further interpretation and current status.
Updated May 2008*

Currently, booster seat legislation exists in seven Canadian provinces. Legislation is a crucial tool in ensuring that children are protected when riding in cars. Booster seat legislation should be enacted in all provinces and territories that do not currently have it in place as soon as possible, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Enact now.

Car seats:
- reduce the risk of death by **71 per cent** for infants under age one.

- reduce the risk of death by **54 per cent** for children ages one to four. (5).

Booster seats: provide up to **60 per cent** more protection than seat belts alone.
(6)

Research shows that an estimated 30 per cent of Canadian children are not properly restrained in booster seats, leaving nearly **1.8 million unprotected.**(7)

Legislation

What does good booster seat legislation look like?

Existing laws in Canada vary slightly due to provincial variables. Safe Kids Canada recommends that legislation be harmonized across the country and include the following provisions to reflect best practices:

.....
Legislation,
combined with
increased
education
campaigns and
enforcement, is
effective.
.....

- a booster seat should be used until a child is at least four feet nine inches tall and 80 pounds (36 kg)
- children can transition to a seat belt once they are a minimum of four feet nine inches tall (145 cm) and it rests in the correct position on their body

Safe Kids Canada recommends that children remain in a forward-facing car seat until they have outgrown the height and weight limitation of the model they are using. Legislation, combined with increased education campaigns and enforcement, is effective. Community education campaigns, which may include giveaways and car seat training, help to increase awareness and compliance within targeted populations. Enforcement programs, such as police spot checks for car seat use, help to raise awareness of laws and penalties for parents and the community.

Increasing investment in child passenger safety.



- ✓ Canada needs a nationally coordinated program that identifies, addresses and evaluates child restraint issues.
- ✓ Government can improve survival rates and reduce injury by supporting on-going research to improve car seat design.

Enact now.

Seat Belt Syndrome:

This is the medical term for the pattern of injuries to a child's internal organs and spine caused by an ill-fitting seat belt.

Experts agree that premature graduation to a seat belt alone jeopardizes a child's safety significantly. Children who skip the booster seat phase and move directly to a seat belt too early in their development are at risk of suffering severe internal injuries during a crash. Child restraints are effective because the car seat harness or vehicle seat belt is positioned over the parts of a child's body that are best able to absorb the force of a crash. The potential damage caused by 'seat belt syndrome' can be severe. Organs between the spine and seat belt are ruptured or crushed – including the liver, kidneys, bladder, spleen, or small intestines. Damage to the spinal cord leaves children at risk of permanent disabilities.

Recovery is rarely complete and many children suffer permanent paralysis.



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Johnson & Johnson Inc. is the founding Sponsor of Safe Kids Week in Canada and proud supporters of this "Give your Kid a Boost!" message.

