

FACT SHEET

To harness or not to harness

RACT

Booster Seat with seat belt



Booster Seat with child safety harness



Recent Australian research has shown that a child safety harness offers no additional protection over a modern booster seat with a properly fitted lap/sash seatbelt.

Recent changes to the Standard have also seen booster seats improve in design, now providing an excellent seatbelt fit.

Parents and caregivers should look for a booster seat that:

- holds the sash part of the seatbelt on the child's shoulder,
- holds the lap part low down across the hips, and
- provides good head protection.

Continue to use the booster seat until the child is tall enough to wear an adult seatbelt correctly.

RACT data shows that around 80% of harnesses checked over the last year were incorrectly fitted, putting the child at greater risk of injury.



High sides providing excellent side impact protection

Sash guide that positions seatbelt on shoulder

Lap guide that positions seatbelt low down on hips

However, a child safety harness may still be recommended when:

- there is only a lap belt available, or
- extra support is required for a child with disabilities.

Note: If your vehicle has a lap-only seatbelt it may be possible to replace it with a lap-sash seatbelt rather than use a harness. This would make it safer for everybody that sits there, including adults.

What advice do you have if I do need to use a harness?

If a harness is required, it is recommended to only use it on a booster seat that features an antisubmarining buckle, such as the one below. The anti-submarining clip holds the lap part of the belt down low across the hips and doesn't allow the belt to be pulled up over the abdomen.

If you must use a child safety harness ensure that:

- the harness is compatible for use with the booster
- it is only used on a booster with an antisubmarining clip
- it is fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- the lap part of the seatbelt is low and firm across the hips
- the shoulder straps of the harness are not overtightened
- the harness is fitted or checked by a restraint fitter to ensure that it is fitted and adjusted correctly
- the harness is checked for good fit each time that it is used.



Shoulder straps are not overtightened

Lap part is low and firm across hips

Anti-submarining buckle used

For more information on RACT Child Restraints contact RACT on 132 722, visit www.ract.com.au or email education@ract.com.au