

# Proper use of Seat Belts for Children

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## **When a child fits properly into a seat belt:**

A child is big enough to sit in the vehicle lap and shoulder belt when they can sit with their back against the vehicle seat back with their knees bent over the edge of the vehicle seat without slouching. This is when a child is approximately eight years old and 4'9". If a child cannot sit properly in the vehicle lap and shoulder belt they should use a belt positioning booster seat.

## **Proper positioning of lap shoulder belt:**

The lap belt should lie securely on a child's upper thigh. The shoulder belt should fit snugly across the chest and rest between their neck and shoulder.

## **Importance of using a booster seat before a seat belt:**

Lap and shoulder belt are designed for adults and made to ride over the bony areas of the shoulders and hips. With small children, the lap belt tends to ride up into their abdomens and the shoulder belt cuts across their necks. A booster seat positions the lap and shoulder belt properly

## **Lap-shoulder belt vs. lap belt only:**

Lap and shoulder belt provide greater protection than a lap belt alone because it provides upper body restraint in addition to lower body restraint. Children large enough for a seat belt should use the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt. If your vehicle has lap only belts in the back seat, you may want to consider having shoulder belts installed by a dealer or repair facility. Most vehicle manufacturers offer retrofit shoulder belt kits for this purpose.



## **Seat belts *do not* go behind the back:**

The shoulder belt should never be placed behind a child. He/she could be seriously injured in a crash. If the seat belt does not fit properly, a child should use a belt positioning booster seat.



## **Seat belts *do not* go under the arm:**

Never place the shoulder belt under a child's arm. Placing the shoulder belt under a child's arm can cause life-threatening injuries in a crash. If the seat belt does not fit properly, a child should use a belt positioning booster seat.