



Auto

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 8 MUST RIDE IN SAFETY SEATS

Washington and Oregon law mandates that children riding in cars must use a child-restraint system until they're **age 8** or reach 4 feet 9 inches tall. That ensures adequate protection in a crash. Drivers who don't properly restrain children face the possibility of being ticketed.

In Washington, the law also requires that **children under 13 must ride in the back seat** of a car when practical.

Both states' laws align with guidelines from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety:

- **Children up to one year** (or weighing less than 20 pounds) must ride in a **rear-facing** safety seat.
- **Children over one year** and weighing 20 to 40 pounds must ride in a **forward-facing** safety seat.
- **Children under 8 years**, unless 4 feet 9 inches tall, must use a **booster** seat with a lap and shoulder belt.
- **Children over 8 years** must use a properly fitting lap and shoulder belt or a booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt.

Traffic crashes are the No. 1 killer of children ages 3 to 14, according to a study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The organization notes that child safety seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71% for infants and by 54% for toddlers in passenger cars. Similarly, children ages 4 through 8 who use booster seats (which give them added height so adult-sized seatbelts fit properly across their smaller bodies) are four times less likely to be injured than children using seatbelts alone, according to Seattle's Harborview Injury Prevention Research Center.

To learn more about choosing the right safety seat for your child, you'll want to check out videos from IIHS: [iihs.org/research/topics/child_restraints/default.html](https://www.iihs.org/research/topics/child_restraints/default.html)

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