



# California Child Car Seat Law & Best Practices

## Car Seat Law

- A child under the age of 8 be “properly buckled” in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat
- A child age 8 or older may use the vehicle seat belt if “properly buckled”.  
Properly buckled means:
  1. The vehicle lap belt on the child’s lap (not on their stomach), and
  2. The vehicle shoulder belt crossing the center of the child’s chest.

*If they are unable to be properly buckled in this way, they must ride in a **booster seat** so the lap belt is on the child’s lap and the shoulder belt crosses the center of their chest.*
- Everyone must be properly buckled up. *For each child* under 16 not properly secured, *the driver (and parent if in the car)* will be fined more than \$475 and 1-point on their driving record.

## Stages of Buckling Up (Follow the height and weight recommendations on side of car seat)



### Stage 1: Rear-facing

Starting from Birth to 3-5 years

(Use until child reaches the maximum height or weight of car seat)



### Stage 2: Forward-facing

Starting from 3-5 to 6-7 years

(Use until child reaches the maximum height or weight of car seat)



### Stage 3: Booster Seat

Starting from 6-7 to 10-12 years

(Use until the child reaches maximum height or weight of booster)



### Stage 4: Seat Belt

Starting from 10-12 years

(Lap belt on lap and shoulder strap crossing center of chest)

Car crashes are the leading cause of injury for children (birth to 16 years). Most parents feel their child is buckled properly in a car seat, but 3 out of 4 children are not. These children are at risk of injury and for being ticketed under the law. Have your car seat checked by a certified technician.



**Pro Car Seat Safety**  
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