



Wigan
Council

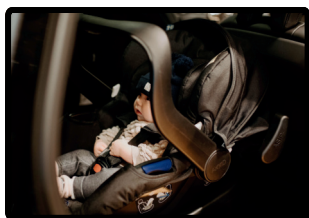


MAKE EVERY JOURNEY SAFE:

Children in vehicles

Your child's safety starts with the right fit. **Not every child seat fits every car—or every child.** It's essential to choose a seat that's right for your vehicle and suitable for your child's height and/or weight and age. Always check both before you buy or install.

Always make sure their car seat is properly secured in your vehicle—and that your child is correctly strapped in. Every car and car seat is different, so always follow the manufacturer's instructions for both. This leaflet is here to give you clear, practical tips to help keep your little one safe on every trip.



DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ Nearly **2 out of 3 child car seats** are fitted incorrectly.*
- ✓ Over **4,250 babies and children** are killed or injured in vehicles every year.**
- ✓ At just **5mph**, an unrestrained child can suffer **fatal injuries**.
- ✓ **Rear-facing seats** can make children **up to 95% safer** in a crash.***
- ✓ **Not every car seat fits every car**—or every seat position.
- ✓ Some **legal car seats haven't been crash tested** to the highest safety standards.

* Based on Good Egg Safety CIC Community Checks. ** Based on DfT Stats 10 year average up to 2022. *** Nordic Traffic Medicine Association



After a Crash, Always Replace – If you're involved in a collision, it's strongly recommended to **replace all child car seats**—even if they weren't in use at the time. The impact can cause hidden damage that affects their safety. Always check with the seat's manufacturer for their specific guidance.

This is also why you should **never buy a second-hand car seat**—you can't be sure of its history or seat integrity.



Don't leave loose items in the car—during a collision, they become dangerous missiles. Even a small object like a mobile phone can strike with the force of a brick, causing serious injury.



Two Ways to Fit a Car Seat – There are two main ways to install a car seat: **using the vehicle's seatbelt** or **using ISOFIX anchor points**. Both methods are equally safe—if installed correctly.

However, **ISOFIX** often reduces the risk of incorrect fitting. Many ISOFIX seats come with **green indicators** to show when the seat is properly secured, giving added peace of mind.

INFANT CARRIER ADVICE

- ✓ **Check the Carry Handle Position** – On many infant carriers, the carry handle doubles as a **roll bar in a crash**, offering vital protection. **Always position it correctly**, as per your car seat manual, **before every journey**.
- ✓ **Limit Car Seat Time for Newborns** – Newborn babies shouldn't be in a car seat for more than **30 minutes at a time**. Staying in a seated position too long can **restrict their airway** and affect their breathing.
- ✓ **The Right Recline Matters** – Infant car seats are designed with a **slight incline** to help keep your baby's **airway open**. This angle prevents their **chin from falling onto their chest**, which can restrict breathing. Always follow the manufacturer's guidance to make sure the seat is **installed at the correct angle**.

LEGAL VS SAFE

Rear-Facing for Longer Is Safer - While it's legal to turn your child forward-facing earlier, the safest choice is to keep them rear-facing until they're at least 4 years old.

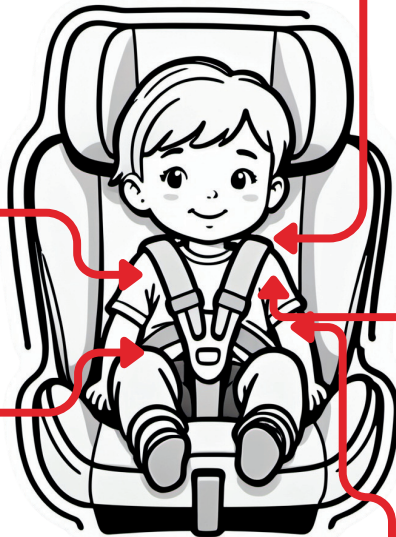
That's because a child's neck and spine aren't fully developed until around age 4–6. In a crash, their body isn't strong enough to withstand the forward forces—putting them at risk of serious injury or even death.

Rear-facing seats provide crucial support and protection when it matters most.

If rear facing, the straps should come out of the back of the child seat level or slightly below the child's shoulders. If forward facing, the straps should be level or slightly above the child's shoulders.

Ensure no straps are twisted to evenly distribute the force across the body in a collision.

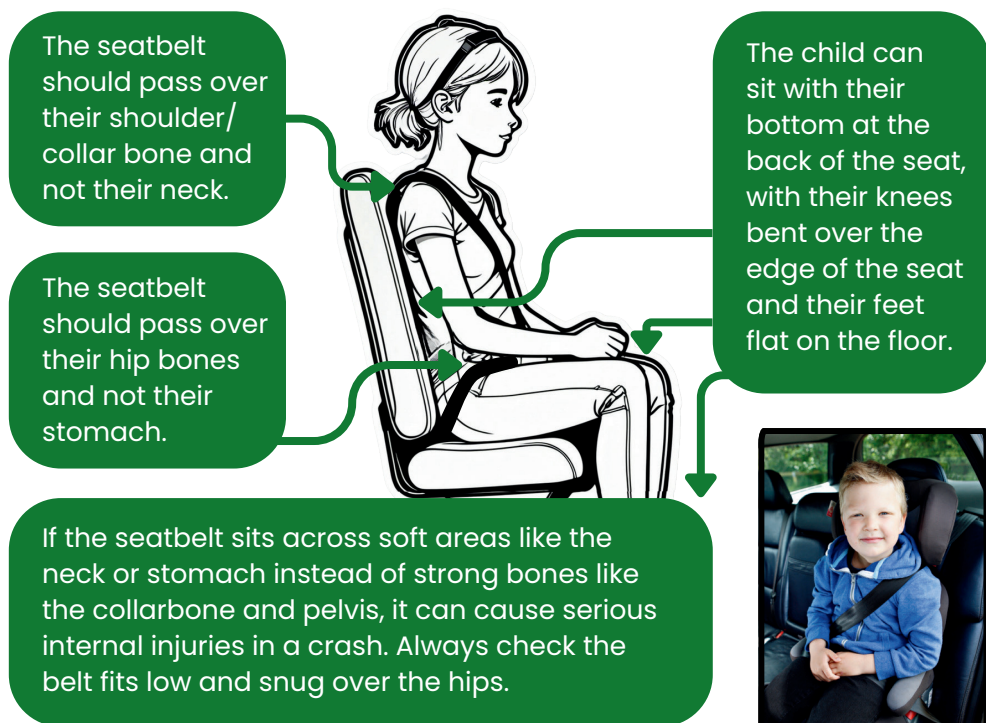
Straps should go across the pelvic bone when using a 5 point harness.



Harness straps should sit close to your child's neck—not slipping off the shoulders. You should only be able to fit **two fingers** snugly between the strap and your child's collar bone.

Don't put thick/padded clothing on your child when travelling. In the force of a collision, the fabric will compress, and your child can be ejected from the car seat.

Is Your Child Ready to Travel Without a Car Seat? By law, children must use a car seat until they're 135cm tall or 12 years old—whichever comes first. However, due to different torso heights, it's best to wait until your child also passes the **five-step safety check** shown in this diagram.



High-back booster seats offer better protection

than basic booster cushions. They support your child's head, neck, and sides—especially in dangerous yet common side-impact crashes. **Check your car's headrests.** They shouldn't push the child seat forward or block a safe, snug fit. **Never** remove the vehicle headrest.

Always refer to your **car and car seat manufacturers manuals** for the most accurate safety guidance tailored to your vehicle and seat. For more information visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/childcarsafety



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Thanks go to: Good Egg Safety CIC (www.goodeggcarsafety.com), Riot Act (www.theriotact.co.uk). Referenced: DFT Casualty Statistics, Nordic Traffic Medicine Association, RAC Foundation, dreamstime ID 126329547.