

Correctly Harnessing Children in Car Seats During Winter Months

Bulky Coats are NOT Recommended for Children in Car Seats



Keeping children warm in cold weather means using winter coats or snowsuits that may be puffy or bulky, but bulky coats and snowsuits can create a loose fitting harness, increasing risk for injury in the event of a crash.

Why? The harness keeps the child in the car seat and protects the child in a crash. Even when the car seat harness appears to be fitted snugly on the child, bulky coats or snowsuits can introduce slack.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends that:

- ♦ Children do not wear bulky coats when secured in their car seats.
- ♦ Bulky coats should be removed before children are buckled up for every ride, every time.

Recommended:

- ♦ Choose coats with lightweight layers, not puffy materials to ensure a snug-fitting harness.
- ♦ Dress children in a sweatshirt or light jacket under the harness straps of a car seat. For added warmth, cover the child with a blanket, or put a coat on backwards over a properly fitted harness.



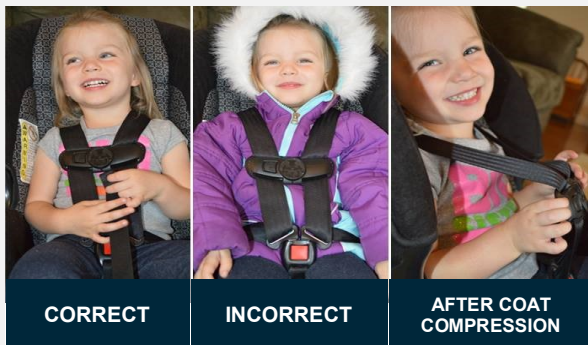
During a crash, a bulky winter coat, snowsuit, or a non-regulated infant swaddling product will compress making the harness straps loose on the child. A loose harness allows the child to have additional forward movement in a crash which is associated with greater injury risks. In a worst-case scenario, a loose harness could allow the child to slip through the straps and come out of the car seat.

Is a child's coat safe to use when securing a child in a car seat?

To Know for Sure...is as Easy as 1-2-3

To determine if a child's coat is too bulky and not safe to wear under the car seat harness while traveling in the car:

1. Put the coat on the child and correctly place the car seat harness on the child. **Secure the harness and adjust to fit snugly.** A snug harness does not allow the webbing to be folded between your thumb and forefinger when pinched at the shoulder.
2. **Without loosening the harness,** unbuckle the harness and remove the child from the car seat.
3. **Remove the coat and place the child back in the car seat.** Correctly place the harness on the child's body and buckle the harness. **Do not tighten the harness** so that the harness remains adjusted to the same tightness as when the child was wearing the coat. If you can pinch the webbing between your thumb and forefinger, the coat is too bulky to be worn under the harness.



HOLIDAY CAR SEAT BUYING BASICS

1

KNOW THE TYPE OF CAR SEAT A CHILD NEEDS

Select the car seat or booster seat that fits your child, fits your vehicle, and fits your budget. If you are unsure, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has a tool to help you select the correct type of seat. To access the car seat finder, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#find-&-compare-seats>.

There are four types:

- ◆ Rear-facing,
- ◆ Forward-Facing
- ◆ Belt-Positioning Booster Seat, and
- ◆ Seat Belt .

What is your child's date of birth?	How tall is your child?	How much does your child weigh?
Month (mm) Day (dd) Year (yyyy)	Feet Inches	Pounds Ounces
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Even though there are many different models to choose from, all car seats meet the same federal motor vehicle safety standards.

3

DO NOT BUY SECOND-HAND CAR SEATS

Never buy a second hand car seat or belt-positioning booster seat from garage sales, flea markets, consignment stores or online. If you do not know the previous owner or the complete history of the car seat, it is not safe to use.

Car seats are not safe to use when they are:

- ◆ Missing parts, labels, or instructions.
- ◆ Not working correctly.
- ◆ Recalled and have not been fixed.

Follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions when a car seat has:

- ◆ Been in a crash.
- ◆ Reached the manufacturer's expiration date.

There's just no way to be sure that a second hand car seat is safe.



2

READ THE LABELS - GET HELP

Before you buy a car seat or belt positioning booster seat, look for the weight and height limits to make sure the selection is right for the child. In Pennsylvania, all children younger than 2 years of age should remain secured in a rear-facing car seat. Read the car seat manufacturers instructions to make sure you are using and installing the seat correctly.

Child passenger safety technicians are available to answer questions and provide education on adjusting the harness and installing a car seat.



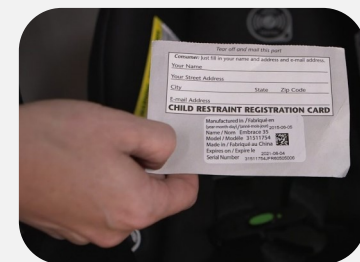
To locate a child passenger safety technician near you, visit <https://pakidstravelsafe.org/resources/car-seat-check-fitting-station-locations/>.

4

REGISTER YOUR CAR SEAT CHECK FOR RECALLS

Complete and mail the **registration card** that comes with your car seat or belt-positioning booster seat.

Register your car seat so the car seat manufacturer can notify you if there is a safety recall. The information provided on the registration card cannot be used for marketing or any other purpose except to notify you about a recall.



Check for recalls at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls>. The car seat manufacturer name and car seat model name or model number is needed to check for a car seat recall.