



# Give your kids a boost(er seat)

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**For years we have known** that seatbelts in cars save lives and reduce or eliminate

injuries. More recently, air bags have improved safety even further. However, seatbelts are not designed for children; nor are airbags, which is why young children should always sit in the back seat. And seatbelts? Add a booster seat with regular seatbelt (still in the back seat) and again, the car is a safer place for your child.

In British Columbia since July 1, 2008, the use of booster seats for children has been mandatory. Specifically, children under 9 years and over 18 kg must be in an appropriate booster seat and using a seatbelt.

Using a booster seat helps to correctly position the seatbelt over the child's shoulder and across their chest and hips. This significantly reduces their chance of injury or even death. This is because most children under 9 are too small for adult seatbelts.

The new laws cover child seating and restraints and make it the responsibility of the driver to implement. All children under 16 must be restrained appropriately. In particular, this means:

Up to one year and 9 kg, use a rear-facing child car seat, but not on a front seat with an active air bag. Over one year and 8 to 18 kg, use a forward-facing child car seat. The child can remain in the rear-facing seat if allowed by the manufacturer's weight limit.

Children over 18 kg and until their ninth birthday, unless they have reached 145 cm (4'9") in height, must use a booster seat and lap/shoulder belt. Within

the manufacturer's weight limits, the child can stay in a forward-facing car seat with harness.

After a child turns 9, they must use a seat belt, but may remain in booster seat if allowed by manufacturer's weight limit.

The aim of the booster seat legislation is very simple: to save young lives and reduce injuries to children. Supporting this aim, and the new rules, are several strategies the goal of which is to increase the use of car booster for children. A big part of that effort is to educate people about booster seats. Children need to be encouraged to accept using the boosters, and parents and drivers need to understand the needs and benefits of this safety device. Also, to know it is law and their responsibility as drivers.

In support of these strategies is a program bringing the booster seat campaign into schools to teach kindergarten children and their parents. Using interactive in-class lessons, instructors from the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation present engage children

and parents in a process that teaches and explains why booster seats are such a good idea.

Though not all of us have children to whom these laws apply, who has not been the driver with young children as passengers? Grandparents, aunts and uncles, close friends all have provided transportation for children. Think about it: do you have a booster seat for your niece or best friend's son?

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