

A Parent's Guide to Kidsafe Roads



A Parent's Guide to Kidsafe Roads

is a publication of the Child Accident
Prevention Foundation of Australia
(Kidsafe Australia).

The information contained in this booklet is derived from child
injury data and consultation with Kidsafe professional advisers.

The information is a guide only and does not override State,
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Background

Injuries are the leading cause of death^{1,2} in Australian children aged one to fourteen, accounting for nearly half of all deaths in this age group. More children die from injury than die from cancer, asthma and infectious diseases combined.^{1,2}

Each year about **150** Australian children (aged 0-14 years) **die²** and **68,000 hospitalised³** as a result of unintentional injuries – the kind often referred to as ‘accidents’. Many of these can be prevented.

In Australia, transport injuries are the most common cause of child injury death² and second most common cause of injury related hospital admissions for children aged 0 to 14 years³.

In 2014-15, transport injuries claimed the lives² of:

- 25 children aged 0 - 4 years, and
- 41 children aged 5 - 14 years.

In addition:

- 794 children aged 0 - 4 years, and
- 5,506 children aged 5 - 14 years

were admitted to hospital³ for treatment following transport injuries in 2014-15.

The good news is that you can reduce the risk of road trauma to children.

This guide describes some simple steps parents and carers can take to help make children safer road users.

For more detailed information on each of the topics presented in this booklet visit **www.kidsafe.com.au** to find your local Kidsafe state/territory website.



1 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2012. A picture of Australia's children 2012. Cat. no. PHE 167. Canberra: AIHW

2 AIHW (2018). Deaths in Australia. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-death/deaths/data>.

3 Mitchell R, Curtis K, Foster K. A 10-year review of the characteristics and health outcomes of injury-related hospitalisations of children in Australia. Day of Difference Foundation. University of Sydney. 5th May 2017.



Safety at Home



Driveway safety

Three children are unintentionally run over every week in Australia - mostly in the driveway of their own home. While four wheel drives and SUV's commonly feature in reversing incidents, many popular family sedans are also involved. All vehicles have blind spots, some extending back as far as 15 metres*.

Children are at risk in the driveway:

- Young children are naturally inquisitive, move surprisingly fast and can run into the path of a moving vehicle without warning.
- From the time it takes for the driver to say goodbye and start the car, a child can move onto the driveway and into the path of the vehicle.
- Due to 'blind spots' a small child can be impossible to see from inside a car, especially if they are directly behind it.



Three
children are
unintentionally
run over
every week in
Australia

Supervise + Separate + See

DON'T GO IF YOU DON'T KNOW

Safety steps to prevent driveway run overs

Supervise:

- Always supervise your children.
- Hold their hand or hold them close to keep them safe when near cars.
- If you need to move a vehicle and you are the only adult around, place your child securely in the vehicle with you while you move it.

Separate:

- Don't let your children use the driveway as a play area.
- Create safe play areas for your children by fencing off the driveway from play areas.
- Make access to the driveway from the house difficult for your children by using security doors, fencing or gates.

See:

- Always walk around the vehicle before moving it.
- Do not rely on parking sensors or a reversing camera if your vehicle has one fitted. You may not notice a small child until it is too late to stop.
- Wave goodbye from a safe place - not in the driveway.



Additional safety tips

Additional safety considerations around the home:

- Know where your children are at all times.
- Never let children play near the road or in the driveway. Create safe play areas around your home by fencing off a play area away from the road and driveway.
- Never leave keys in a vehicle. If on a farm, this includes farm vehicles and farm machinery.
- Never leave the car motor running.
- Ensure vehicles are locked and secured before leaving them.
- Never leave children alone in vehicles, even if they are asleep and you can see them.

Never let
children play near
the road
or in the driveway



Safety in the Car



Car safety tips

Buckle up

Ensure you teach children about the importance of buckling-up on every trip.

- Adults should 'model' correct buckling-up behaviour.
- Do not start the car until everyone is buckled up correctly.
- Ensure children know that they are not allowed to unbuckle their seat belts until you say so.
- Watch out for children trying to help you by undoing restraints for their baby brother or sister.
- Never allow children to share a seat belt.
- Never hold a child on your lap whilst travelling in a motor vehicle. This is unsafe and against the law.

Airbags

Airbags are designed to protect adults in a crash. They deploy at high speeds to the chest height of an average adult. This can be dangerous for children.

It is recommended that:

- Children 12 years of age and under should not sit in the front seat.
- Rearward facing child car restraints should not be fitted in the front row of seats in vehicles with an active front passenger airbag.

Refer to your vehicle owner's manual for further information on the airbags in your vehicle, and whether they impact on the safety of children or the position of child car restraints.



Children 12 years
of age and under
should not
sit in the front seat

Cargo space or open load

It is illegal to ride in the cargo space of vehicles such as utilities, vans and trucks. Loose objects become dangerous missiles in a crash, striking with up to 20 times their own force.

- Consider where you place luggage and loose items in your vehicle. Ensure you secure these items in an area away from passengers.
- Keep the back shelf under the rear window free of loose articles, even tissue boxes.
- Install a cargo barrier or use the cargo blind/curtain provided in station wagons, hatchbacks, four-wheel drives and panel vans.
- Only use cargo barriers approved to the Australian/New Zealand Standard and installed by an approved fitter.
- Ensure luggage such as prams and groceries are carefully packed in the boot space so it is evenly distributed across the width of the cargo area, close to the seatback.
- Do not pack luggage higher than the back of the seat.



Child car restraints

Which child car restraint do I use?

- Use an approved child car restraint which meets the mandatory requirements of the Australian/ New Zealand Standard (AS/NZS 1754) for child car restraints. Restraints complying with the standard will have AS/NZS 1754 printed on the restraint labelling.
- Do not use child car restraints purchased in other countries. Only Australian Standards compliant child car restraints can be sold and used in Australia.
- Prior to the introduction of the 2010 edition of AS/NZS 1754, restraint types were recommended based on the weight of the child. Current restraints use the child's age and height to determine suitability for use.
- Always refer to and follow the manufacturer's instructions for your restraint.
- Always check the age and history of older and second hand restraints. They should be less than 10 years old and have never been involved in a crash.

Remember:

Always use your child car restraint until the child has reached its maximum size limits before progressing to the next type of restraint. It is important that you follow the manufacturer's instructions for your particular child car restraint when deciding when to move your child to the next stage.

Access the “Best Practice Guidelines for the Safe Restraint of Children Travelling in Motor Vehicles” or view our Passenger Safety Animation. Both resources are available on the Kidsafe Australia website.

For more information on child passenger requirements contact your local Kidsafe state or territory office by visiting www.kidsafe.com.au.



Children under 6 months of age

Must use an approved:

- Rearward facing child car restraint with an inbuilt harness
- Properly fitted to the vehicle
- Adjusted to fit the child's body correctly.

Children under 6 months of age are not permitted in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats.

It is recommended to:

Keep your baby in a rearward facing child car restraint until they outgrow it. This will be when they have reached the maximum size limits (length/weight).



Child car restraints *(continued)*

Children 6 months to 4 years of age

Must use either an approved:

- Rearward facing child car restraint with an inbuilt harness, **OR**
- Forward facing child car restraint with an inbuilt harness
- Properly fitted to the vehicle
- Adjusted to fit the child's body correctly.

Children under 4 years of age must not travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats.

It is recommended to:

Keep your child in a child car restraint with an inbuilt harness until the child reaches the maximum size limit (height/weight) of the restraint. Extended rearward facing options are available on some convertible child car restraints which have the ability to take a child rearward facing up to 2-3 years (30 months) of age.



Rearward Facing Child Car Restraint



Forward Facing Child Car Restraint

Children 4 to 7 years of age

Must use either an approved:

- Forward facing child car restraint with an inbuilt harness, **OR**
- Booster seat with a properly fastened and adjusted adult seatbelt.

Children aged 4 to 7 years must not travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats unless all the back seats are occupied by other children who are also under 7 years.

It is recommended to:

Keep children in the most appropriate restraint until they reach the maximum size limit (height/weight). If your child is over 7 years of age and still fits in a child car restraint/booster seat, keep using it.

Child car restraint models are now available with inbuilt harnesses to accommodate children up to approximately 8 years and booster seats that accommodate children up to approximately 10 years. When deciding whether your child is ready to sit on the vehicle seat do the “*five step test*”. See the “Child Restraint Guidelines” publication on the Kidsafe Australia website.



Child Car Restraint with Inbuilt Harness



Booster Seat with Adult Seatbelt

Fitting a child car restraint

A correctly fitted child car restraint, appropriate for the child's age and size, can reduce the risk of serious injury or death in road crashes. Make sure you have your child car restraint fitted before the due date of your child's birth.

Child car restraint upper tether anchorage points

Locate the child car restraint upper tether anchorage point using your vehicle owner's manual. The anchorage point should be directly behind and central to the seating position.

If your vehicle is NOT fitted with anchorage points, DO NOT consider making any modifications to your vehicle on your own.

Any after market modifications should be installed by an authorised person, who will then supply you with a modification permit.

Contact your local transport authority for further information.

Anchorage bolts

An anchor bolt kit comes with each new restraint but is generally missing from second hand restraints. These kits can be purchased separately if you need one. Install the anchor bolt and fitting, following the instructions in your vehicle owner's manual if one is required.

The current hook attachment system was introduced in 1993. Child car restraints with a keyhole attachment are now more than twenty years old and should no longer be used.

Some vehicles also have integrated anchorages already fitted into your vehicle and require no additional parts.





ISOFIX Lower Anchorages

Some vehicles will be fitted with lower anchorages which are often referred to as ISOFIX attachments. Check your vehicle owner's manual to find out whether your vehicle has ISOFIX attachments and where they are located. ISOFIX is an alternative way to attach your child car restraint to the car instead of using a seatbelt.

Since 2014, ISOFIX compatible child car restraints suitable for children from birth up to approximately four years of age have been available in Australia. These child car restraints meet the Australian Standard AS/NZS1754:2013. These restraints can be installed using the adult seatbelt or ISOFIX.

Regardless of whether you install a child car restraint with ISOFIX or the adult seatbelt, you **MUST** use the upper tether anchorage attachment.

For further information on ISOFIX compatible child car restraints and vehicles contact your local Kidsafe centre.



Fitting a child car restraint *(continued)*

Fitting the restraint

Always read the instruction booklet carefully when installing the child car restraint.

Keep the instructions with the child car restraint in the pouch provided in case you need to refit the restraint or adjust the harnessing.

Incorrect installation can lead to increased risk of injury and increased severity of injury.

Avoid common misuse issues by:

- Ensuring seatbelts are connected at all times using the correct pathway. Check seatbelts for twisting, frayed edges or other damage.
- Make sure the inbuilt harness is correctly fitted and adjusted.
- Connect upper tether anchorage attachment to the correct anchorage point for that seating position.
- Identify and use the correct anchorage point. Ensure that the correct components are being used in anchorage assembly.
- Never use both the adult seatbelt and ISOFIX attachment when installing child car restraints. Choose one, and always ensure the upper tether anchorage attachment is also used. Use the vehicle owner's manual to ensure the correct installation of child car restraints with ISOFIX.

Contact your local Kidsafe state or territory office for a list of authorised child car restraint fitters close to you. Some Kidsafe centres offer this service themselves.



Preferred position

Children 12 years and under should always be seated in the rear seats of a motor vehicle.

When choosing the best place for a child car restraint to be fitted, there are a number of factors to consider. This includes:

- Is there access to the required attachment systems? This includes the upper tether anchorage attachment and suitable adult seatbelt or ISOFIX attachment.
- Does the child car restraint interfere with the driver's seat, other child car restraints or booster seats, and access by other passengers?
- Can I get my child/children in and out of the vehicle safely (using the safety door)?

For more tips refer to the "Child Restraint Guidelines" publication on the Kidsafe Australia website.

Destroy child car restraints after a crash

The Australian Standard requires that where a child car restraint is involved in a severe crash (where the main body structure of the car is damaged) the child car restraint should be destroyed. This also applies if there is no obvious damage to the restraint and the child wasn't using the restraint at the time.

Check with your vehicle insurer to find out if your policy covers replacement of child car restraints after a crash.



Driver safety

Drive carefully and take regular breaks as many crashes are the result of driver fatigue. Rest stops help restore concentration and beat drowsiness.

Driver vision

Drivers need to have full vision at all times.

- Use sunblinds and tinted films to protect your child from glare. Ensure these are only used on the rear and side windows to allow ample light transmission.
- Make sure all sunblinds are securely fastened and can't distract you.
- Never use a nappy/towel in the side windows because it will block the driver's view.
- Place window signs, such as 'Child on Board' out of the line of sight.

Driver distraction

Don't let your children's behaviour distract you.

- Keep them occupied by talking or singing to them and/or provide soft toys to play with.
- Provide drinks that can't spill and healthy snack foods.
- Take regular breaks on long drives to allow everyone to stretch their legs.



Motor vehicle accidents can happen at any time, including on short trips, so it is important that children are properly restrained at all times when travelling in a vehicle.

Tips to keep kids in seats

- **Explain the rules as you place the child into the child car restraint:** do this every time you get into the car so your child understands that the rules are always the same. Be a good role model and make sure you always buckle up too!
- **Praise and encourage the child for keeping the harness or seatbelt on:** reward good behaviour with lots of attention. It is better to ignore tears or tantrums, however difficult this seems at the time.
- **Choose the right time to start:** the best time to begin setting a new routine is when you don't have to go somewhere in a hurry.
- **Make sure the child can see you:** place the child car restraint where you can see each other, a child who can see your face is less likely to get bored or feel lonely.
- **Don't drive unless the seatbelt or harness is done up:** if the child removes the straps or undoes the buckle, stop the car and re-do the belt, explaining what you are doing. Never drive while the belt is undone or twisted.
- **Keep checking:** check to see if the belt is still on throughout the journey.

Hot cars

Leaving children unattended in the car, even for a short time, can be FATAL.
In most states and territories in Australia it is also against the law to leave children unattended in a motor vehicle.

Children do not tolerate heat as well as adults. Their smaller body size and greater surface area means they feel the effects of heat much more rapidly.

On a typical Australian summer day, the temperature inside a parked car can be as much as 30° higher than the outside temperature, i.e. on a 30°C day, the temperature inside the car could be as high as 60°C.

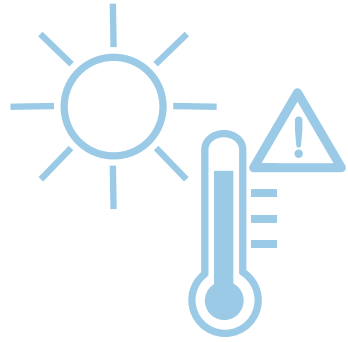
Seventy-five percent of the temperature rise occurs within 5 minutes of closing the car and leaving it⁴.

Young children are at risk of dehydration, heatstroke, hyperthermia, and asphyxia. These can all lead to serious injury or death. NEVER leave children unattended in the car.

Tips to keep kids safe from hot cars:

- Take children with you anytime you leave the car, even to run a quick errand.
- Do not use the car as a substitute 'baby-sitter'.
- Try to do jobs when your children are not with you, such as putting fuel in the car.
- Look for service stations which offer pay at the pump services.
- Ensure cars are locked and the keys are out of reach of children to prevent them from gaining access to the car.





Safety when travelling in hot weather:

- Provide plenty of cool fluids, preferably water, and offer them to children regularly.
- Dress children suitably to promote airflow around their bodies i.e. if the car does not have air conditioning, dress the children in clothing made of lightweight fabric and light in colour.
- Double check that the harness fits the child. Harnesses may need to be tightened in summer time as children are likely to wear lightweight clothing.
- Avoid using the the hood of a rearward facing restraint in the car. This will decrease airflow around the baby's head. Instead use a visor or sunshade to protect the baby from the sun.
- Make frequent stops, at least every 2 hours, so that everyone can get out of the car for exercise. This includes removing the baby from the restraint, and allowing the baby to roll around on a rug on the ground.
- Check the fit of the children's harnesses when getting back into the car.
- Plan car journeys for the cooler hours of the day.
- Cool your car down as much as possible before putting the child in the car.
- Where possible, park your car undercover or in the shade to reduce the amount of direct sunlight hitting your car.



Car safety checklist

- Check that the child car restraint complies with the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 1754).
- Use the centre rear position where possible.
- Check the fit of the restraint. It should suit the child's age and size.
- Check the harness. It should fit snugly. Straps should be adjusted so they are firm around the child's body.
- Ensure that restraints are correctly installed and maintained.
- Ensure vehicle seatbelts used to secure a child car restraint are done up.
- Ensure all passengers in the car use their restraint or seatbelt. As the driver you are legally responsible.
- Ensure child safety locks are activated on vehicle doors.
- Never swaddle a baby before placing them in a child car restraint, the harness needs to fit around their body correctly.
- Never add accessories to your child car restraint that are not supplied or recommended by the manufacturer.





Safety on the Road



Pedestrian safety

Walking is an important part of children's lives. It is important for their health and fitness, and their ability to get around their neighbourhood independently.

Being a pedestrian can be a risky business, especially for children in busy cities. Roads are designed with adults in mind, but children are not 'little adults'. As a child's brain is still developing they may not have a full understanding of the dangers around them to make 'safe' decisions.

Here are some guidelines to help keep children safe as pedestrians at different ages:



Up to 5 years old

- Separate play areas from cars. If possible, fence your child's play area off from driveways and the street. If this is not possible, help children choose safe places to play away from cars and driveways, and supervise them closely.
- Always walk right around your car before reversing out. Have everyone else using your driveway do the same.
- Hold your child's hand when you are near traffic.
- Set a good example. Explain what you are doing when you cross the road together.
- Make sure they get in and out of cars on the kerb side (safety door).
- Ask your preschool if they teach road safety and what safety measures are in place.

Stop, Look, Listen and Think

From 5 to 9 years old

- Supervise your child at all times near traffic, particularly when crossing roads.
- Teach your child how to cross roads safely. Children must first stop at the kerb. Then they need to look and listen for traffic, wait for vehicles to stop before deciding if it is safe to cross. ('STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK')
- Make the trip to school together along the safest route and use safe crossing places as an example for your child to follow.
- Arrange for your child to be supervised on the way to and from school, and during or after school activities if you are unable to be there. Ask if your school has a walking school bus program.
- Explain words like "fast", "slow", "near" and "far". Talk about signs and traffic lights and the safe places to cross. Point out dangerous places and where not to cross – near curves and where things might hide children from view.
- Choose a safe meeting place for your child to wait when being picked up from school. Never call them over from the opposite side of the street. Cross the street with them.
- Make sure children get in and out of cars on the kerb side (safety door).
- Ask at your child's school what traffic safety programmes are taught.
- Make sure your child wears clothing that is easy to see when out and about.



Small wheeled devices

Skateboards, inline skates, roller skates, ripsticks, micro-scooters and scooters

Falls are the most common cause of injury when using small wheeled devices. There have been reports of injuries resulting from collisions with other people and objects. Most falls are the result of simple loss of control.*

Identify safe spaces specifically set aside for skating. Check with the local council for skate parks in the area.

Check with your local roller dome or skate centre to find out if they offer lessons.

Learning how to fall safely is critical in reducing the risk of injury.

Safety is simple

- Avoid poorly made products.
- Use protective equipment such as helmets and wrist, elbow and knee guards.
- Learn to ride and practice in a safe place such as a dual footpaths away from roads, driveways and slopes.
- Use small wheeled devices in a safe manner. Pedestrians have right of way so keep left and give way.



Scooter safety checklist

- Check the brakes and the locking mechanism.
- Check for sharp protrusions and edges.
- Make sure the steering column locks easily and does not collapse. Ensure that this is also the correct height for the rider.
- Ensure handlebar grips are secure and do not swivel.
- Use a scooter with high ground clearance, non slip foot-boards and larger brake pads.

Wrist guards

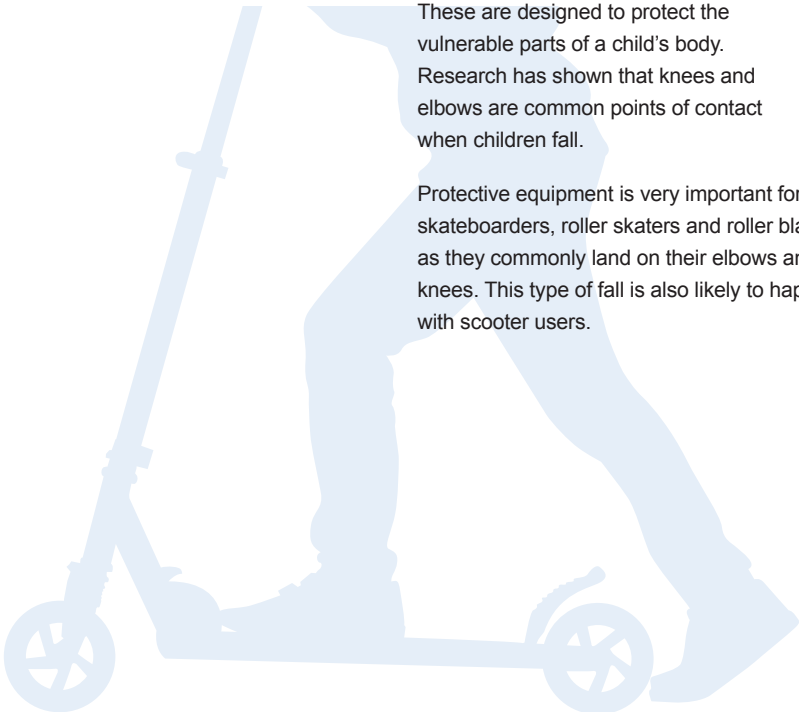
Wrist guards are designed to strengthen the wrist to reduce the risk of serious damage or broken bones. Serious injury can happen quickly and easily.

A child losing their balance and putting out their hand to break their fall is a common occurrence. Broken wrists or arms are the most frequent serious injury among skateboard riders, roller bladers and scooter users.

Knee and elbow guards

These are designed to protect the vulnerable parts of a child's body. Research has shown that knees and elbows are common points of contact when children fall.

Protective equipment is very important for skateboarders, roller skaters and roller bladers as they commonly land on their elbows and knees. This type of fall is also likely to happen with scooter users.



Bicycle safety

Most cycling injuries don't involve another vehicle, but occur when children fall off their bikes after crashing into a pole, curb or fence. Head injuries are the main cause of death and disability to cyclists. Bike helmets help reduce injury.

Every child needs a helmet even if they are not riding on the road or they are being supervised by an adult.

Helmets

To be effective a helmet has to be well fitting and has to be used! Helmets should be worn when cycling, skateboarding, rollerblading, roller skating and using scooters. Children should be introduced to a helmet when they first start to use ride-on toys.

Helmet fit

- Measure the child's head before purchasing a helmet in order to select the correct size.
- The helmet should fit firmly on the head with the chinstrap securely fastened.
- Do the push test once fastened. If the helmet can be pushed backwards and forwards then it won't protect the front or the back of the head in a fall. This means that the helmet is too big.



Tips for safe cycling

- **Make sure the bike fits:** A bike that is too big or small is a safety hazard.
To check that the bike is the correct size get your child to sit on his/her bike. The child's toes should touch the ground on both sides.
- **Do equipment spot checks:** Parents should ensure their child's bicycle is equipped with safety devices such as lights, reflectors and a bell or horn.
- **Be a positive role model:** Set a good example when cycling with your children and wear a helmet too - it is required by law!
- **Make bikes safer:** Buy safe bicycles, with spoke and chain guards. Ensure bike lamps are used at dusk or at night. Fit safety devices to bicycles such as reflectors and safety flags.
- **Ensure supervised riding:** Children under ten years old should cycle with responsible adults. Most children in that age group do not have the skills to cycle safely without supervision.
- **Learn the rules of the road:** Make sure children are taught the rules of the road for safe cycling practices before they are allowed to ride by themselves.
- **Know the dangers of the driveway:**
Children should know the driveway is dangerous and can pose a safety risk. They should always stop before entering the road, scan by looking in all directions, listen and think about if it is safe to cross the road. Do not encourage children to ride their bikes in the driveway.
- **Wear bright coloured clothing:** Cyclists should wear bright coloured clothing or use a visibility vest so they stand out and are easy to see.



Bicycle safety *(continued)*

More tips for safe riding:

- Keep young cyclists on a footpath or shared path, unless a no bicycles sign is on display. In most states/territories, the road rules allow children under 12 to ride on footpaths, but remember that driveways are dangerous.
- Do not allow children to ride on busy streets or to ride at night.
- Help children understand when it is safe to cross the road.
- Teach children to walk their bikes when crossing the street, crosswalk or railway crossings.

Riding with children as passengers

Kids' bike seats and trailers that attach to a parent's bike provide easy transportation of young children, while parents enjoy all the benefits of riding.

When is my child ready to ride as a passenger on a bicycle?

Your child's neck and back must be strong enough to support their head and the extra weight of a helmet while riding. They must also be able to cope with the additional forces experienced when speeding up, slowing down and bouncing over bumps or potholes. It is recommended not to take a child under 12 months on a bike or in a bike trailer.

By law, your child must wear a properly fitted helmet when on a bike seat or in a trailer. In the event of a crash, the helmet protects your child's head from impact with the ground and the bike, bike seat or trailer frame.

The helmet must not force the child into an uncomfortable position. If the helmet forces the child's head forward, they may be too young.

Teach children to
walk their bikes
when crossing the street

Tips for riding safe with children as passengers:

- Ensure the seat or trailer is securely fixed to the bike before putting the child in the seat. If you are not sure, get a bike shop to install the carrier.
- Make sure the bike is stable before putting the child in, or taking them out, of a rear or front mounted seat.
- Never leave a child unattended in a bicycle-mounted child seat.
- Make sure the child wears a properly fitting helmet and harness at all times.
- Ride conservatively to take account of the longer braking distances and reduced manoeuvrability due to the extra weight.
- Make sure you have full control of the bike and child before riding in public areas. Test ride before you take the bike into busy areas.
- Don't use a baby backpack or sling while riding your bike. These make you less stable and, if you crash, the child has much further to fall and you might fall on them.
- Always look for bike seats, carriers and helmets that meet Australian Standards.



For more information

Kidsafe AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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**Contact the Kidsafe office in your state or territory or visit
www.kidsafe.com.au.**



Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia

www.kidsafe.com.au