

## Extended Harnessing

Far too many children are moved in to booster seats or adult belts (with no booster) far before they are physically or mentally mature enough to. Maturity means behaviour wise (can they sit still for the whole journey, do they misbehave and put the shoulder belt behind their backs?) and physically means height and weight as well as bone maturity.

Top 3 reasons kids go in to a booster (when they really shouldn't):

- Their younger sibling needs their harnessed car seat
- Their friends are in booster seats
- Need to replace their old seat due to age of seat/returning a loan seat and need a cheap replacement

Please don't "demote" your child to a booster seat for any of the reasons above (or for ANY reason for that matter) when they still fit perfectly well in a their harnessed seat. Think about buying or renting another seat with harness until they are physically ready for a booster seat or adult belt. Don't use what other restraints your child's friends are using (if any) as an indication that they should move in to a booster. Unfortunately, not all parents make an informed decision before moving their child on to the next "stage."

"Every step in car seat "advancement" is actually a step down in your child's protection" - CPSafety.Com

Some parents prefer to keep their children harnessed for as long as possible as they feel harnessing offers them optimal protection in an accident, giving more upper torso support as well as spreading the crash forces evenly over the torso. Belts and harnesses spread the crash forces over the areas that are being touched. The more "points" there are in a restraint system (i.e. 3 points for a lap/sash belt, 5 for a 5-point harness) the more the forces can be spread out, instead of just concentrating on only a few parts of the body. However, a child who is over 4, within the weight and height requirements of a booster seat (with the adult belt correctly fitted in all ways), and behaves (sits well for the whole ride), is certainly still well protected and appropriately restrained. The reason we say four is because by then their head to body ratio has evened out a bit more and usually by four years of age the behave enough to use a booster seat with adult belt.

Your child has outgrown their child seat if:

- Their eyes are above (if even marginally) the top back SHELL of the seat (not the cushion at the top, if it has a spongy cover, the actual plastic shell)
- They are 18kg or over or
- They've outgrown the harness, slot wise (see: FAQ )

If your child has met any of the criteria above, then some suggestions might be:

- Find another car seat e.g. convertible booster . Convertible boosters still use inbuilt harnesses up until 18kg but typically have taller backs and higher harness slots than normal child seats, accommodating your child for longer. Newer designs of convertible boosters may also allow for the use of an installed child harness (bought separately) right up to 26kg.
  - Buy a booster seat whether plastic or polystyrene and use in conjunction with a child harness for more upper torso support. You may also want to look for seats with anti-submarine devices that prevent the child from slipping under the belt.
  - Find another car seat that harnesses with its inbuilt harness past 18kg. As of April 2008 there is no such seat, with the exception of the Brio Zento - in the rear-facing only position.
- If you have a Safe-n-Sound, HiPod, Babylove, GoSafe, Mother's Choice or Babywise (not infant seat, must be Australian Standard ) child restraint. The Britax bulletin about car seats is worth a read.

## PLEASE NOTE:

Plastic full boosters without tethers (as present in New Zealand) - Whether or not you choose to use a child harness with an un-tethered plastic booster probably comes down to a parental decision. Sometimes (particularly with boosters that have adjustable backs) the width of the "head" of the booster is far too wide, and pushes the child harness off the child's shoulders. Make sure you try the harness and booster seat together before you buy or use them to ensure the harness sits in all the right places on the shoulders, and down the chest.

Full boosters with tethers - May not use these additional child harnesses unless they have a Versa-Tether™ Catch. These catches look like an extra strap at the end of the tether with a metal (and often rectangular) piece for the child harness to clip on to. Seats that can not use child harnesses include (but are by no means limited to) the HiPod Barcelona, the original Safe-n-Sound Maxi Rider (now discontinued and replaced with the MaxiPlus), Evenflo Generation, Nania Nuevo, Evenflo Chase, Evenflo Bolero and the Evenflo Apollo. After the inbuilt harnesses are outgrown, these seats may only use the adult lap/sash belts to secure the child in to the seat/car.

Half/Backless booster seats and polystyrene boosters - Can use child harnesses up until either the weight limit of the child harness, or the weight limit of the half/backless/polystyrene booster seat (which ever comes first).

Whenever unsure, please contact the manufacturer (not the product importer/distributor) of your harness and/or booster seat to ask if the two can be used together.

## Using a Child Harness

The use of a child harness is most commonly suggested to fill the "gap" between the child outgrowing their forward-facing child seat (whether it be a convertible car seat, forward-facing car seat or convertible booster seat) until the time they are big and responsible enough to sit in a booster seat with just an adult three point belt.

Child harnesses are also recommended for vehicles where there is no choice but to utilise the lap belt when there are more children than there are three point belts present. Wherever possible, it is recommended to use a child harness in conjunction with a booster seat that has an anti-submarine clip to nullify the possibility of the lap belt riding up on to the abdomen of the child. It is absolutely vital that you make sure the child harness is fitted correctly according to the manufacturers instructions. It is also critical to make sure that the lap belt lies low on the hips/high on the thighs to lessen the risk of severe abdominal injuries which can be sustained if the child harness is tightened too much and rides up on to the abdomen of the child. Using a child harness - What NOT to do

1. This arrow indicates the distance between the seat bight (the crease/join where the seat back and seat bottom meet) and the child's bottom. For proper seatbelt fit, a child should not slouch. If they do, then there is an increased risk of "submarining" under the seatbelt. There is also the risk of the seatbelt riding up on to the abdomen which can cause some horrific injuries in an accident. This child needs to be able to sit all the way back against the car's seat (see also #2 and #3). 2. The lap portion of the belt is riding up FAR too high on the abdomen. The lap portion of the belt needs to be as low as possible, touching the thighs (see the green line). The lap belt needs to be against that nice, hard pelvis where all those strong bones are. Instead of up on the abdomen with risk of injury to the internal organs (see

also #3 and #1)3. The red line demonstrates where the edge of the seat is. The child is slouching so that she can bend her knees comfortably over the edge of the auto mobile seat. In turn, this brings the lap belt up on to her abdomen and can cause her to "submarine" under the seatbelt and/or suffer horrific abdominal/internal injuries. (see also #2 and #1)4. There should be a head restraint behind this child's head. Children that use backless boosters/harness by itself, or no booster/harness at all, need to have a head restraint behind their heads. The head restraint needs to be raised when their eyes are at or above the top of it [the head restraint]. Head restraints are important so that the head is kept forward of the seat, instead of whipping backwards in an accident. How can we fix this? We can move the child in to a full booster which will solve the head restraint problem and the slouching problem. Or, we could move the child to a position with a head restraint behind their head, and use a backless booster to stop them slouching and to keep the lap belt low on the hips/high on the thighs. We must also make sure that we tighten the lap belt snugly BEFORE we tighten the child harness. Ensure you don't tighten the child harness so much so that it pulls the lap belt up on to the abdomen. Product suggestions

Currently (as of April 2008) there are no child restraints available in New Zealand nor Australia that hold weights above 18kg, with the exception if the Brio Zento. Although the Brio Zento forward-faces only till 18kg, it does however rear-face until 25kg. This seat is available in New Zealand Only.

If you are using a booster seat and the adult belt used in conjunction with the booster seat is not appropriately restraining your child, please consider the option of an additional child safety harness that tethers to your vehicle. This harness still uses either a lap belt, or a lap/sash belt converted in to a lap belt with a locking clip.

Make sure you read the instructions thoroughly and use and position the harness correctly. **NEVER OVER-TIGHTEN THE HARNESS!**

Please note that "options" are not ordered in preference or safety. What's most important is finding the most appropriate seat for your vehicle, your child, one that you will use correctly every time and of course - one that suits your budget.

#### Option #1: Brio Zento - 3-in-1 Car Seat

The Brio Zento is a 3-in-1 Car Seat (rear-facing, forward-facing, booster) that harnesses to only 18kg forward-facing however does harness to 25kg rear-facing.

Option #2: Safe-n-Sound Maxi Rider II - Convertible booster.

Option #3: Safe-n-Sound Explorer - Convertible booster.

Option#4: Safe-n-Sound MaxiPlus - Convertible booster.

Option #2, #3 and #4 are "Convertible Boosters". These can be used from 8 - 18 kg with their inbuilt harnesses. After 18kg they can be used in conjunction with a Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness. This enables you to have your child harnessed up until they 26kg (the maximum weight limit of the booster seat), or they reach its height limitations (whichever comes first). The Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness is fitted through the shoulder slots in the Maxi Rider II, Explorer and MaxiPlus. These convertible boosters also have anti-submarine clips. PLEASE NOTE: These seats must not be used with any other form of child harness except the Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness.

You may not find the 'Protecta Harness' in stores (in fact others might not have even heard of them) however if you specifically request your local baby store (i.e. Baby Factory, Kiwi Baby) ring Britax Childcare Ltd Head Office and have one sent in, they should be able to do this for you.

Option #5: Secure Infa Vario - Booster seat - This seat has a Versa-Tether&trade; Catch and can be used in conjunction

with either the original Safe-n-Sound Child Harness or the Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness.

Option #6: Secure Cindy II - Booster seat - This seat has a Versa-Tether&trade; Catch and can be used in conjunction with either the original Safe-n-Sound Child Harness or the Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness.

Option #7: Safe-n-Sound Hi-liner (must be Safe-n-Sound brand, not Britax UK) - Booster seat - This seat has a Versa-Tether&trade; Catch and must only be used in conjunction with the Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness.

Option #8: Safe-n-Sound Pegasus - Booster seat - This booster seat has an anti-submarine clip between the legs and can be used in conjunction with either the original Safe-n-Sound Child Harness or the Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness.

Option #9: Any polystyrene booster can be used in conjunction with either the original Safe-n-Sound Child Harness or the Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness.

Option #10: Any half/backless booster can be used in conjunction with either the original Safe-n-Sound Child Harness or the Safe-n-Sound Protecta Harness.

Option #11: If the child weighs too much for a booster seat you can use the child harness on its own. However this is providing that:

- - the child is within the weight limitations of the child harness
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  - the child can sit all the way back against the cars seat
  - 
  - the lap portion of the safety belt rests high on the thighs or low on the hips
  - 
  - their knees can comfortably bend over the edge of the cars seat and
  - 
  - they do not slouch in this position
- Assembling the Protecta Child Harness in to the Maxi Rider II Convertible Booster

This is a guide only to make things a little easier for you to understand with pictures. Please remember it's still very important that you read your instruction manual. These directions are not a replacement for your child restraint user manual. Pull up the cover and locate the anti-submarine clip hidden in a crevice in the base of the seat.

At the rear of the restraint, remove both the harness shoulder straps from the strap connector by slipping strap through open slot

Feed the LH harness strap and cross strap through the appropriate harness slot. Pull the RH harness strap and chest strap through the opposite shoulder slot. Make sure that the anchor clip also feeds through to the back of the restraint. Hook the attachment clip on to the harness versa tether catch and ensure that the straps line up to equal length. When you put the Maxi II in to the car make sure that you hook the tether strap hook to an appropriate anchor bolt! Feed the RH strap (loop end) into the crotch strap loop to connect the two sides. Then, feed the lap or lap/sash belt through the lap loop of the harness.

Feed the lap or lap/sash belt through the second lap loop of the harness and buckle it in. Once buckled in, if using a lap/sash belt, you need to convert it to a lap belt with the gated buckle provided (as per instructions). Make sure that the gated buckle is as close to the base of the vehicle seat as possible.

Pull the adjuster strap to loosen slack in the harness system. Make sure that the lap belt isn't pulled up too much towards the childs abdomen but lays high on the thighs/low on the hips. Roll up adjuster strap and secure with storage strap.

Bring the anti-submarine clip up and behind the lap portion of the vehicles safety belt. Put the lap portion of the belt in the centre of the anti-submarine clip (with the teeth hanging over the front). Pull up the split crotch strap (anti submarine) and engage the anti-submarine harness clip in to the buckle. All done! Nice and safe!