



# Precious Cargo *In The City*

Car Seat Safety & Safely Transporting Children in the City presented by  
**BRITAX**



Sarah Tilton , BRITAX Child Safety Advocate and *The New York City Dads*

The *NYC Dads Group* continue to offer amazing and informative educational workshops. I was privileged enough to join them for a special workshop on car seat safety led by the "Car Seat Whisperer," *Sarah Tilton*. *Sarah* has worked at BRITAX for about 12 years. Car seat safety is a very important industry, and it's her passion. She loves her job: Child Passenger Safety Advocate Manager/ Technician Instructor. The *Dads* there and via live twitter feed, asked the most superbly structured questions, that would make any spouse proud. Here are just a few of those queries, and *Sarah's* answers:

**Q. *What age can a child sit in the front seat?***

Children should not sit in the front seat until they are at least 13 years old for developmental strength.

**Q. Can a car seat be installed in the front seat of a vehicle?**

**NEVER** place a child seat rear facing in a front passenger seat that has an airbag, unless the airbag is off. If you need to place the child seat in the front seat, make sure the airbag is turned off and move the vehicle seat as far back as possible. **DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY** can occur if an airbag contacts the seat. (The airbag does not have to be switched off when the seat is placed forward facing in front of an airbag.)

**Q. During pregnancy many women say the seat belt is uncomfortable. Do they have to wear it?**

Always wear the seat belt! Wear it under the belly as the baby grows.

**Q. I have a 5 yr old who sits in a high back car seat. When she falls asleep she is floppy. Is there anything I can do about that?**

A sleeping child falls out of position and makes the seat belt less effective. A harness on the car seat will help support her. The BRITAX *Frontier* has a harness that will keep them from being floppy and give them more support.

**Q. What angle do we need for infant car seats and why?**

A 45 degree angle from vertical is safest when younger, because there is no head control. In a crash the head flops forward and will potentially block the airway. Most car seat manufacturers have a YouTube installation video (Pool noodles can be used to keep the car seat in place)

**Q. What age can we turn the babies forward facing?**

All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are at least 2 years old or until they reach the highest height or weight allowed by their car seat's manufacturer. You may be well within the legal limit to have them forward facing, however, best practice recommends you keep children rear facing as long as possible. Typically it's us as adults that believe the children are uncomfortable and then want to turn the car seat around. There are no documented injuries with rear facing seats even up to 5/6 years old.

Children are **5xs** (5 times) safer in rear facing seats.



**Q. What is the best car seat to buy for my newborn?**

You can choose either a rear facing only infant car seat or a convertible car seat. A convertible car seat is good from birth and turns into a forward facing seat. This option may be more economically feasible if you have room for it. Ultimately it is a lifestyle choice since an infant seat can be used with a travel system or a snap and go.

**Q. How do you know they have outgrown the car seat?**

Rear facing only infant seats tend to weigh 4.08-4.54 kilograms (9-10 lbs) empty.

The child has outgrown the seat when : Taller than 81.28 centimeters (32 inches) more than 13.61 kilograms (30lbs) or less than one inch from the top of the seat. Any child who has outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their convertible car seat should use a forward-facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their car seat should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached

144.78 centimeters (4 feet 9 inches) in height and are between 8 and 12 years of age.

**Q. When can my child graduate to a booster seat?**

Kids, especially younger ones, are safer in a 5-point harness. Don't rush to "graduate" your child to a booster seat. If your child still fits in his 5-point harness car seat, leave him there! Kids who are AT LEAST 18.14 kilograms (40 pounds) AND AT LEAST 4 years old can start using boosters.

A seat belt fits properly when the shoulder belt crosses the middle of the chest and shoulder, the lap belt is low and snug across the thighs, and the child is tall enough so that when he sits against the vehicle seat back, his knees bend at the edge of the seat and his feet hang down. Children must remain in a booster seat until they pass the *5-point test*.\*\*

According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), "All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their [5-point harness] Child Safety Seat should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle lap-and-shoulder seat belts fit properly, typically when they have reached 144.78 centimeters (4 feet 9 inches) in height and are usually between 8 and 12 years of age. There is a safety advantage for young children to remain in Child Safety Seats with a harness for as long as possible before transitioning to booster seats."

**Have you read the user manual for the car seat?**

Please read the car seat installation section. Although there are lots of videos out there; they are support, not a replacement.

<http://www.britaxusa.com/support/user-guides>  
(Installation video/user guides)

What is the most common car accident?

Frontal collision

What is the most common injury?

Whiplash

**Q. What is the best car seat to buy?**

The car seat that fits my baby, my child's needs and fits in my car. It needs to have features that the primary caregivers are going to use correctly each and every time.

**Q. Is there a difference between a \$40 and a \$400 car seat?**

Every car seat meets the same baseline as every other car seat. Comfort creature features and ease of use features increase the final cost of the product.

**Q. Where is the best place for the car seat to be placed?**

The safest place for your child in any vehicle is in the back seat. Although the center is perceived as the safest, because it is the furthest from lateral impact, a car seat is just as safe with proper installation anywhere in the back seat. Center back seats are often narrow and the seat often bubbles. There is a good level of safety in all places in the car. A properly installed car seat in an outboard position will provide excellent protection for your child during a crash. Make sure to check your child seat and vehicle user's guides for available seating positions.

**Q. Do I need a car seat on a plane?**

A child seat has been tested and certified to meet *FAA* requirements if it is labeled, "This restraint is certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft." Even though your child seat may be certified for use on aircraft, it is still a good idea to contact the airline prior to travel to ask. Some aircraft have seating configurations which are incompatible with certain child seats.

Some BRITAX child seats are not certified for use on aircraft. Booster seats are not certified as a lap and shoulder belt is needed with a booster. Please refer to your product user guide to determine if your BRITAX car seat is certified for aircraft use.

Traveling can be expensive with babies, so here are a few tips:

A baby under 2 years old 'can' be considered a 'lap baby', according to *FAA* regulations. Book tickets on a red eye, fly midday, do not fly during peak hours. Inquire about discounted tickets for car seat babies.

Aircraft certifications - car seat has passed the *Inversion* test. What size car seat for a plane? Choose bigger crafts with bigger seats @ 18.14 kilograms (40lbs) child weigh. Forward facing @ 29.43 kilograms (65lbs). Replace one seat at a time. You're not required to, but both the *Federal Aviation Administration* and the *American Academy of Pediatrics*

strongly recommend that you use an *FAA*-approved child restraint device. That means either an approved car seat or the CARES harness.

Legally you may carry a child up to 24 months old on your lap, usually free of charge — but unexpected turbulence can send that lap-carried kid flying out of your arms. And in a crash, your child could be crushed against your body.

Ironically, the law mandates that everything in an airplane cabin be battened down during takeoff, landing, and turbulence — except children young enough to ride on their parents' lap.

Why isn't there a law requiring child safety restraints in airplanes? Because *Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)* analyses have found that if forced to buy an extra airline ticket, many families would drive instead. And statistically that's a far more dangerous way to travel.

Whether you use a car seat or a harness, your child will need his/her own seat on the airplane. If your child is young enough to ride free, you may be able to find an empty seat for him/her, but there's no guarantee. Many airlines offer half-price tickets for small children. Call your airline to ask for a discount, or ask what the company's policy is for using empty seats.

### **Q. What kind of car seat do I need on a plane?**

Before you bring a car seat on board an airplane, make sure it's *FAA*-approved. The label should read, "This restraint is certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft." Flight attendants are instructed to look for the label, and you may run into problems if it's missing.

Be sure to measure the car seat you're planning to travel with, too. To fit into a typical coach seat, the car seat should be no wider than 40.64 centimeters (16 inches) (though you can lift the airplane seat's armrest to accommodate slightly wider car seats).

You'll want to book a window seat. That's where you'll need to put the car seat, to make sure it won't block the escape path in an emergency. You may not put a car seat in an aisle seat or exit row.

### **Q. Do I need a car seat if we are only going a few blocks in a Taxi?**

If you had a car you would not transport your child without a car seat. **Buy a car seat!**

**FAA recommends for children riding on airplanes:**

**Less than 9.07 kilograms (20lbs)?  
Ride in a rear-facing car seat.**

**9.07 kilograms (20lbs) to 18.14 kilograms (40lbs)?  
Ride in a forward-facing car seat.**

**Over 18.14 kilograms (40lbs)?  
Use the airplane seat belt.**

**As always, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully when strapping your child into the seat.**

### *5-Point Test\*\**

1. Does the child sit all the way back on the vehicle seat?
2. Are knees bent comfortably at the edge of the vehicle seat?
3. Does seatbelt cross the shoulder properly? (It should be centered over the collar bone)
4. Is the lap portion of the seatbelt low - touching the thighs?
5. Are the child feet planted firmly on floor?

**Bonus step -  
Can the child stay seated this way for the entire ride, every ride (awake or asleep)**

**Factual**

2800 car crashes last year, included taxis. Major crashes occur in the cities, five miles from home.

**info:*****Q. Should a child sit in a shoulder belt even if they do not fit it?***

Adult seat belts are not designed to restrain children and ill-fitting belts can actually cause injuries in a crash. Of course that isn't an excuse to not buckle up. Kids are always better off if they are restrained in a crash, even if it's sub-optimally. Not buckling up dramatically increases the child's risk of serious or fatal injuries.

***Q. How tight should the harness be?***

60% of parents do not tighten harnesses, or are not tight enough. Harness straps should fit snugly against your child's body. Check the car seat instructions to learn how to adjust the straps. The chest clip should be placed at armpit level to keep the harness straps secure on the shoulders. All the material on the child will be compressed in an accident. Allow kids to wear a thin coat, fleece type, in a car seat. Chest plate simply positions in the harness.



**"If my wheels are moving  
my seatbelt should be on!"-**

Sarah Tilton

***Q. What about used or second hand car seats?***

Do not use a used car seat if:

1. You do not know the history of the seat
2. The car seat has been in a crash
3. It has been recalled
4. It is too old (check with the manufacturer)
5. It has any cracks in its frame
6. Or it is missing parts. Make sure it has a label from the manufacturer and instructions.

*Call the car seat manufacturer if you have questions about the safety of your seat.*

**Q. What is LATCH?**

*Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH)* is a car seat attachment system that can be used instead of the seat belt to install the seat. These systems are equally safe, but in some cases, it may be easier to install the car seat using *LATCH*.

Vehicles with the *LATCH* system have anchors located in the back seat, where the seat cushions meet. Tether anchors are located behind the seat, either on the panel behind the seat (in sedans) or on the back of the seat, ceiling, or floor (in most minivans, SUVs, and hatchbacks). All car seats have attachments that fasten to these anchors. Nearly all passenger vehicles and all car seats made on or after September 1, 2002, are equipped to use *LATCH*.

The tether improves the safety provided by the seat. Always follow both the car seat and vehicle manufacturer instructions, including weight limits, for lower anchors and tethers. Remember, weight limits are different for different car seats and different vehicles.

There are two changes to federal safety standards that just went into effect on Feb 27, 2014 :

**1. New label requirements:** While that doesn't sound like a big deal – it actually is. *NHTSA* has ruled that car seats with a point harness should not be installed using the lower *LATCH* anchors if the combined weight of your child and the car seat exceeds 29.43 kilograms (65 lbs). In these cases, you should discontinue using the lower anchors in your vehicle to install your car seat and switch to a seatbelt installation instead when your child reaches a certain weight. The label will tell you at what point you should make that switch.

If your carseat was manufactured before Feb 27, 2014 and the 5-pt harness has a weight limit of more than 18.14 kilograms (40 lbs). Please check your carseat instruction manual for guidance on *LATCH* weight limits. There may or may not be limits listed. *BRITAX* lists *LATCH* weight limits.

**2. Testing with the new 10 year old Hybrid III dummy:** This dummy weighs about 35.38 kilograms (78 lbs) and is 129.54 centimeters (51 inch) tall. Any car seat manufactured after Feb 27, 2014 that has a 5-point harness rated beyond 29.43 kilograms (65 lbs) will be required to fit this 10 yr old dummy and also be required to pass certain crash test performance standards using this dummy. (The *BRITAX Frontier 90* and *Pinnacle 90* will retain their 90 lb. harness weight limits as those seats are already tested with the 10 yr old dummy.)

*NYC Dads* have been a catalyst for change in the perception of fathers as capable caring partners in parenting. As society continues to embrace this reality, the *NYC Dads* have developed wonderful relationships with companies and organizations who get it. *BRITAX* gets it! Thank you *BRITAX*.

#BritaxSafety @britax @nycdads.

<http://www.britaxusa.com/support/webinars>

**\*\*Car seats are One time use. If it was in a crash, replace the car seat/ seat belt.\*\***