

Automobile Restraints for Children with Special Needs (Quick Reference List)

Many innovative products are available to safely transport children with special needs. Unfortunately, education for parents of these children and the professionals serving them has not kept up with the strides in the technology to protect these youngsters. Due to lack of awareness, many programs are not providing or utilizing available products. SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. believes that federal leadership is needed to encourage targeted efforts, such as those addressing treatment needs of those with “orphan diseases,” to give these children the protection they deserve.

Recommendations for Low-Birth-Weight Babies

For premature or small infants, use a rear-facing-only seat or convertible seat certified for use from birth or 3 pounds (Nania Baby Ride, Combi Shuttle 35 or Coccoro). For those 4 lbs. or more, there is a wide selection. Choose a seat with very low shoulder strap slots and more than one crotch strap location. Many seats come with an infant insert that improves harness fit and allows a younger baby to be more reclined within the seat; some also have a foam pad placed under the seat cover to lift a tiny newborn up so the shoulders are close to the strap slots. Secure the harness on the infant, wearing lightweight clothing, according to manufacturer's instructions. If there is no infant insert, place rolled diapers or receiving blankets along both sides of the infant's body. Do not place blankets or padding between the baby and the safety seat or harness nor near the face. Exception: to limit slumping, a wedged diaper or a small washcloth can be placed between the infant's crotch and the crotch strap in some safety seats; others ban this. Some small infants are not able to travel safely in the semi-upright position; the consequences could be fatal. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants born at less than 37 weeks gestation be monitored in a semi-reclined position in their safety seat prior to discharge to detect possible breathing and heart rhythm problems. Use a side-facing car bed certified for use in motor vehicles if baby must lie flat for medical reasons. For TEST details, refer to the 2009 AAP clinical report, “*Safe Transportation of Preterm and Low Birth Weight Infants at Hospital Discharge*” (<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;123/5/1424>) for more information.

Side-Facing Car Beds (For babies who must lie flat)

Angel Guard Angel Ride Infant Car Bed (discontinued in 2018; may be picked up by another manufacturer.) Side-facing car bed for babies up to 9 lbs. Baby may ride on back, front, or right side if ordered by doctor.

Dorel Cosco Dream Ride SE Side-facing car bed for babies 5 to 20 lbs. Baby lies on back or, if advised by doctor, on stomach.

Merritt Manufacturing Hope Car Bed Side-facing car bed for babies 4.5 to 35 lbs. May be ordered with cut-outs for babies in spica casts. Generally will fit in ambulances.

Recommendations for Other Children with Special Needs

Most young children with special needs can use a conventional convertible seat. All children should ride rear facing at least until age two, preferably longer; check instructions for the maximum weight. For physically challenged children, it is clearly important to provide the best possible protection. Look at seats that can be used rear facing up to 40-50 lbs., forward facing up to 65-90 lbs., and can be reclined for children with poor muscle tone when used forward facing.

Forward-Facing-Only Seats

Bergeron Special Tomato Car Seat MPS Small (20 to 80 lbs.) or large (up to 130 lbs.) Must be tethered for children over 50 lbs. Adjustable headrest, positioning features, mobile floor base, stroller base.

Convaid Carrot 3 (30-108 lbs.) Adjustable pads for positioning. Must use special cushion for children under 40 lbs. LATCH equipped. **Convaid Carrot Booster** (30-108 lbs.) LATCH equipped.

E-Z-On Products (various harness-style vests) Especially useful for children and adults with behavioral issues or poor trunk control. Models for casted child to lie flat on rear seat or for school bus use (uses cam wrap instead of safety belt). Newer models expire after six years. The Kid Y harness may be used with **Safety Angel Ride Ryte Booster**. Tether or cam wrap required.

Inspired by drive (formerly Columbia Medical) **Spirit IPS** (20-102 lbs.) **Spirit and Spirit Plus** (25-130 lbs.) Adjustable pads for positioning. Must be tethered for children over 65 lbs. Can be fitted on wheelchair or stroller.

Merritt Manufacturing Churchill (65-175 lbs.) Booster with positioning features (no harness). **Roosevelt** (35-115 lbs.) Optional positioning pads and seat extenders (2 sizes) to support longer legs. Conventional tether use is recommended but not required with the long routing of a lap-shoulder belt and use of the provided EZ-Tether Connector Strap. **Wallenberg** convertible seat for kids 5-80 lbs. in spica cast.

R82 Snug Seat Pilot Booster is made by **Diono** (40-120 lbs.). Harness for positioning only, adjustable back width and headrest, 2 recline positions. **Wallaroo** (22-106 lbs.). LATCH equipped; dual tether use required over 50 lbs.

Safe Traffic System Ride Safer Travel Vests (30-60 lbs. or 50-80 lbs.) #3 models must be used with lap-shoulder belt. #2 can be used with lap-shoulder belt or with lap belt and top tether. #4 models can be used with a lap-only belt and tether up to 60 lbs., or with a lap and shoulder belt. May be used with Delighter booster.

Sammons Preston Rolyan Tumble Forms Carrie Seats Various sizes. Tether required.

Thomashilfen (formerly Exo Motion) Recaro Monza Nova 2 Reha (33-110 lbs.) harness for positioning only; **Harmony Defender Reha** LATCH equipped, 22-65 lbs. in harness mode, 30-110 lbs. in booster mode.

Wheelchair Tie-Downs (For transport in buses and vans; must be installed forward facing)

EZ Lock Wheelchair Docking System Driver or passenger can lock in place without assistance.

Ortho Safe Systems Protector. Wheelchair tie-down.

Q'Straint Four straps used to attach chair; vehicle lap and shoulder belt used for occupant.

Safe Haven by **New Haven.** Wheelchair & occupant securement systems.

Sure-Lok. Wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint systems.

Look for WC-19 labeling to indicate crash testing.

Safety Seats Used for Ambulance Transport: New ambulance standards may affect fit of some restraints.

EVS Ltd Hi-BAC Safety Seat for ambulances has a built-in harness system for children at least one year old who weigh 20-50 lbs. If no child is present, the attendant may use the Hi-BAC; the rear-facing orientation improves protection. For infants, use the lap belt to attach a regular convertible safety seat with harness straps in lowest slots, reclined, and installed so baby faces the rear of the vehicle.

Serenity Safety Products Guardian Safety Seat is an ambulance seat that swivels to face forward or rearward. It has an integrated cradle for 5-22 lbs. if seat installed rear facing; booster with 5-point harness for 23-85 lbs.

Dorel DreamRide SE Use side facing; use a tie-down on gurney with sets of loops on both sides.

Convertible seats (various weight limits) may be used when the child is the patient. Attach with both sets of tie-downs on the gurney, with head area either raised or flat. Regardless of child's age, safety seat faces rearward; use harness slots at or below child's shoulders.

Accessories and Products with Special Features

Lilly Gold Sit 'n Stroll (birth to 30 lbs. rear facing; up to 40 lbs. forward facing). Converts to stroller.

Simple Parenting Doona (4-35 lbs. rear-facing only). Converts to stroller.

Merritt Manufacturing Jefferson is a rear-facing seat for omphalocele patients (7.5-40 lbs.). **Buckle Guard** prevents occupant from releasing safety seat buckle. **Chest Clip Guard** prevents occupant from escaping safety seat.

Kids Fly Safe CARES (22-45 lbs.) and **Special CARES** (large child and adult) harnesses used with lap belt; only for use in aircraft.

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