

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 (Combi Shuttle 35 or Coccoro, Goodbaby/Evenflo LiteMax or SafeMax retroactively, and Summer Infant Affirm 335). 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 or adjustment. 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 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 cloth 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://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/123/5/1424>) for more information.

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

Dorel Cosco Dream Ride with LATCH Side-facing car bed for babies 4 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. May fit in ambulances. **Angel Ride Infant Car Bed** Side-facing car bed for babies up to 9 lbs. Baby may ride on back, front, or right side if ordered by doctor. Order through Prevention Alternatives, shinn@comcast.net

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.

Convertible and Forward-Facing-Only Products

Bergeron Special Tomato – Soft Touch Booster, Small (51 to 90 lbs.) or large (81- 130 lbs.) Must be tethered for children over 50 lbs. Adjustable headrest, positioning features, mobile floor base, stroller base.

ETAC/Convaid - Carrot 3 (30-108 lbs.) Adjustable pads for positioning. Must use special cushion for children under 40 lbs. Tether not required. **Carrot Booster** 79-165 lbs., LATCH equipped.

ETAC/R82 - Pilot Booster is made by **Diono** (30-120 lbs.). Harness for positioning only, adjustable back width and headrest, 2 recline positions. **Quokka** is LATCH-equipped convertible seat with a spica positioning wedge for children 5-39.6 lbs. **Wallaroo** (22-106 lbs.) is LATCH-equipped; dual tether use required over 50 lbs. Spica cast insert now available. Belly pad makes harness buckle inaccessible to child.

EZ-On Vest, Y Harness, MAX Vest, or Kid Y Harness 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.

Inspired by drive (formerly Columbia Medical) **Spirit IPS** (20-102 lbs.), **Spirit Plus**, and **Spirit Spica** (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 EZ-Tether Connector Strap provided. **Wallenberg** convertible Spica-cast seat for kids 5-80 lbs.

Safe Traffic System Ride Safer Travel Vests (30-60 lbs., 50-80 lbs. or 80-110 lbs.) Gen 2 can be used with lap-shoulder belt or with lap belt and top tether; Gen 3 models must be used with lap-shoulder belt. Gen 4 can be used with a lap-only belt and tether to 60 lbs., or with a lap and shoulder belt. Gen 5 models can be used with a lap-shoulder belt or a lap-only belt and tether to 110 lbs. May be used with Delighter booster to 100 lbs.

Thomashilfen (formerly ExoMotion) distributes the **Recaro Monza Nova 2 Reha** (33-110 lbs.) with harness for positioning only, adjustable headrest, optional swivel base and footrest available; **Defender Reha US LATCH** equipped, 22-65 lbs. in harness mode, 30-110 lbs. in booster mode. Made by Harmony Juvenile.

Wheelchair Tie-Downs (For transport in buses and vans; must be installed forward facing. Look for WC-19 labeling to indicate crash testing.)

AMF Bruns of America Protektor System - Wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint system.

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

Ortho Safe Systems Quick Secure. Wheelchair tie-downs.

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.

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 coming out at or below child's shoulders, reclined, and installed so baby faces the rear of the vehicle.

Dorel DreamRide SE Use side facing; put 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

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

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

Merritt Manufacturing – Chamberlain is a positioning device for children 81-225 lbs.; **Jefferson** is a rear-facing seat for omphalocele patients (7.5-40 lbs.). **Buckle Guard** prevents inappropriate release of safety seat buckle. **Chest Clip Guard** prevents occupant escape from seat.

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

<p style="text-align: center;">SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. P.O. Box 553, Altadena, CA 91003 310/318-5111 800/745-SAFE www.carseat.org</p>
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