
Traveling Safely on a Plane

Everyone in the family should ride properly restrained whether on the road, on the tarmac, or in the air.

Buy the ticket: Children younger than 2 years are not required to be restrained or secured on aircraft during takeoff, landing, and conditions of turbulence. They are permitted to be held on the lap of an adult. Preventable injuries and deaths have occurred in children younger than 2 years who were unrestrained in aircraft during survivable crashes and conditions of turbulence so buy the ticket for your under-age 2 children and be sure they are properly protected in an approved safety seat.

Not all safety seats can fit on standard airplane seats, which are typically about 16 inches wide, but Safe Kids Worldwide and the Federal Aviation Administration strongly recommend using an approved child restraint if it fits. As in cars, babies and young children are best restrained in a rear-facing car seat, and a forward-facing car seat can protect toddlers when they outgrow the rear-facing convertible seat.

Children who have outgrown safety seats should sit directly on the airplane seat and, like all passengers, keep the lap belt buckled across their thighs or hips. Booster seats cannot be used on airplanes, because they require shoulder belts and airplane seats have only lap belts.

What other restraints can they use? In addition to conventional harnessed child restraints, one harness restraint is approved by the FAA for use on planes, called CARES. This vest is for children who weigh between 22 and 44 pounds and up to 40 inches. The CARES vest may be used for children with special health care needs who are over these limits. FIND OUT MORE: <http://www.kidsflysafe.com/faqs>

Where should kids sit? The FAA advises travelers with small children to reserve a pair of seats by a window. Car seats are not allowed in aisle seats or exit rows, where they could block emergency escape routes so they must be used at a window seat. Most airlines offer a discount for children under 2, so always ask!

Everyone should stay buckled up for the full trip. Even if you are allowed to sit unbuckled, turbulence is often unexpected. It is best to be secured in your seat, just like your kids.

Additional Resources:

- [FAA Flying with Children](#)
- [AAP Restraint Use on Aircraft policy statement](#)
- [CARES Child Aviation Restraint System](#)