

# Child Restraints

The mandatory Australian Standard AS1754 is one of the most stringent child restraint safety standards in the world. It has been said that children in Australian Standards' approved child restraints, have survived crashes previously thought to be unsurvivable by overseas experts.

How do you choose a restraint for your child?

One of the most important factors in your choice of restraint should be this, your vehicle.

- Check that the restraint fits correctly onto the back seat of your vehicle.
- Consider the restraints ease of use and accessibility for your physical body size. This is particularly important if you own a two-door vehicle or a high wheelbase 4WD.
- Find out if your vehicle has a passenger side front air bag. If so, you must take into consideration your vehicle manufacturer's recommendation on how far forward the front passenger seat should be positioned.
- It is illegal to have a rearward facing restraint in a ute with a passenger side front air bag.<sup>3</sup>
- Don't confuse safety with comfort. A higher level of comfort doesn't necessarily equate to a higher level of safety.

- Second-hand restraints are definitely not recommended. Damage to a restraint is not always visible to the naked eye and is not always as dramatic as resulting from a car accident. It can be as innocuous as mould on the harness. Even the slightest damage can render a restraint unsafe. Your child's safety is worth investing in a new restraint.

Once you have chosen your child restraint, it is **vitaly** important to have it installed correctly.

- Read the manufacturer's instructions **before** attempting to install the restraint.
- In the rearward facing position, your baby's head should not be falling forward onto his/her chest. To correct this situation, it may be necessary to alter the angle between the squab of the vehicle and the base of the restraint.
- The front seat should not be touching the restraint.
- The tether strap shouldn't have any slack.
- There should be no movement in the base of the restraint. Most vehicles will need a gated buckle to achieve this. The latest research into side impact protection rates a rigid base as being very effective in reducing the risk of injury.<sup>4</sup>
- If you are in doubt, have your restraint fitted or checked by a professional