



Child Occupant Protection Laws in North Carolina and Safety Guidelines from Safe Kids Worldwide

North Carolina, welcome to the Child Safety Law Map, a new tool from Safe Kids to inform families about the child occupant protection laws in North Carolina and all states. Because the laws of many states are not as strong as most families want for their children, this fact sheet also includes guidelines to best protect your child on the road.

North Carolina Child Occupant Protection and Seat Belt Laws

When is a child restraint required?	When must a child sit in the rear seat?
	Children 4 years and younger who weigh less than 40 pounds must be in the rear seat unless the front passenger airbag is deactivated or the restraint is designed for use with airbags
7 years or under and under 80 pounds	Who is covered by the seat belt law?
	Riders 16 and over
When can a child start using a seat belt?	In what seats does the seat belt law apply?
8-15 years or 40-80 pounds in seats without shoulder belts	All
What is the maximum fine for a first car seat violation?	What is the maximum fine for a first seat belt violation?
\$25	\$25.50; \$10 for rear seats
Does law give immunity to person rescuing child in hot car? No	

Our Guidelines for Protecting Your Child

Laws vary from state to state, with some states having higher standards than others. Safe Kids encourages North Carolina families to adopt the following safety guidelines for protecting their children. Here are the top five recommendations for keeping kids safe in cars:

1. For the best protection, keep kids in a rear-facing car seat until they are at least age two and have outgrown the height or weight limit on the label of the car seat. Keep them in the safer rear-facing position as long as possible, because kids who ride rear-facing have the best protection for their head, neck and spine.
2. Children who have outgrown their rear-facing car seat move to a forward-facing seat with a harness. Keep them in the forward-facing car seat until they reach the weight or height limits on the label of the car seat. Remember to use the car seat's tether to secure the forward-facing car seat to the car.
3. After a child gets too big for the weight or height limits listed on the forward-facing car seat's label, move to a booster seat used with the vehicle lap and shoulder seat belt.
4. A child is ready for using the seat belt alone when they pass these three tests: The child's knees should bend at the edge of the seat when their backs and bottoms are against the vehicle seat back; the vehicle lap belt fits snugly across the bony hips or upper thighs (not soft stomach); and the shoulder belt fits across the bony shoulder and chest (not across the soft face or neck.)
5. All children under 13 years of age are safest riding in a back seat.

Learn more at www.SafeKids.org and check out the Ultimate Car Seat Guide at www.SafeKids.org/guide. And remember to buckle up everybody in the car, every ride, every time. Find your North Carolina coalition at safekids.org/coalitions.