

Safer Airplane Travel With Babies and Toddlers

Child
Safety
Facts
2012

Why buckle up your child in an airplane?

- A child riding on your lap would be torn from your arms in a crash or in rough air! Rough air (turbulence) is common and can happen without warning. It can cause serious injuries to people not buckled up.
- Many crashes in large or small planes are survivable. Buckling up helps you and your child avoid injury so you both can escape (page 2).
- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics urge parents to buckle up all children in flight.
- Child safety devices (car seats and special FAA-tested devices) are tested to hold a child securely in a crash or turbulence.
- You and your child are likely to have a happier flight if the child is in a familiar, comfortable car seat.
- The car seat you use on board will be ready to use at the end of the flight. A car seat that is checked could be lost or damaged.



You and your baby deserve the best possible protection! The FAA recommends that all passengers fly buckled up at all times.

Which child safety devices can be used in airplanes?

- **Rear-facing and forward-facing car seats** with harnesses: Use one that fits your child's weight and age. Car seats must have a label saying they are certified for use in aircraft.
- **Special aircraft-only devices:** Must have label stating FAA approval; CARES harness is available (Resources, page 2).
- **Foreign car seats** for families traveling from overseas: These can be used if they meet the standards of a foreign government or the United Nations. (Check labels on the seat.)
- **Not allowed:** Booster seats or vests for use in cars. NO "belly belts" made to hold a child on an adult's lap (allowed by some countries).
- **For children over age 2 without a safety device:** The lap belt must be used. A snug fit may not be possible for small, thin children. Using a safety seat or harness is always best.
- **For children who no longer fit into special devices:** Lap belts must be used. The aircraft seat belt is likely to fit a child better than a lap belt in a motor vehicle. The lap belt will help restrain a child in turbulence or a crash.

Turbulence Happens!

**Make sure everyone in your family
is buckled up at all times
during flight.**

Before you fly

- **Buy a ticket for your infant or child.** Look for an airline that has discounts for young children.
- Not all flight personnel are well informed about FAA recommendations, so take the FAA brochure along (Resources page 2).
- The FAA requires airlines to allow the use of a car seat or aircraft-only device if the child has a ticket. Many airlines also allow use of a car seat in an empty seat.
- Make sure your child's safety device is allowed (see left).
- Get seats assigned ahead of time. Car seats should be used in window seats or the center of a wide row between two aisles. Two children and a parent can use three seats together. Child safety devices are not allowed in exit rows or rows behind or in front of exits.
- A rear-facing convertible car seat may need the extra space of a bulkhead seat.

*Make
Every Ride
A Safe Ride*



On the plane, use the safety device correctly!

- Follow manufacturer's instructions as closely as possible. Car seats with tethers can be used in aircraft without the tether anchored.
- Tighten the lap belt (see below for hints on belt tightening).
- Keep the harness buckled around your child during flight.

Hints for easier travel with kids in car seats

- For the best fit in aircraft seats, use a car seat less than 16 inches wide.
- If the car seat base is wide, try raising the armrest for more space.
- To install a forward-facing car seat, first recline the aircraft seatback. Then put the belt through the car seat belt path. Turn the belt over so the buckle flap is *toward the airplane seatback*. (This allows you to release it later.) Tighten the belt and then return the seatback to the upright position.
- If two adults are traveling, one can board early and install the car seat. The child can play in the boarding area with the other adult and board later.
- Bring a pacifier or a bottle filled with water for a baby or a straw to drink with for a child. Sucking helps keep ears from hurting during take-off and landing.
- Bring diapers, wipes, snacks, small picture books, and quiet toys.
- Getting to and from the gate: If you must drag a car seat, hold on to the tether strap, not the harness.
- **Some car seats have travel features** (see Resources): Many car seats attach to strollers; one car seat, the Sit'n'Stroll, is also a stroller; Diono sells car seats that fold and have a carry strap; some car seat travel bags have wheels.
- When making flight connections, arrange with the airline in advance for help getting your children, car seats, and carry-ons to the next flight.
- Harnesses that hold children on parents' laps are NOT allowed for take-off and landing, even if they claim to meet FAA standards.

Why can't boosters and car safety vests be used on board?

Aircraft seats are different from motor vehicle seats. Crash tests show some automobile products will not protect children in air crashes.

- Car vests that are attached only with a lap belt allow too much forward motion. Tethers needed for other vests cannot be attached in airplanes.
- A booster cannot be used in an aircraft because there is no shoulder belt. You can use a combination child seat/booster with its harness on aircraft.

How to escape with a small child in an emergency

The FAA has done escape tests with child dummies. It found that the safest, easiest, and fastest escape methods are:

Window exit: If escaping through a window, hand your child to another person outside before climbing out yourself.

Emergency slide: Hug your child to your chest with both arms (see picture, right). Put one hand behind an infant's head.

Jump into the slide. Don't sit at the top first. That could make you lose your grip on your child, or people behind could push you and make you fall.

If you decide not to buy a ticket for your child under 2 years old

- You are more likely to get a free seat and be able to use a car seat if you fly during times when planes are not full.
- Check with the airlines to make sure you can use an empty seat for your child.
- Remember you will need a car seat after the flight.

Resources

Federal Aviation Administration: tips for parents, 800-FAA-SURE (322-7873), www.faa.gov/passengers/fly_children/crs

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org (search: aircraft safety)

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.: Resources, car seats in planes, FAA regulations; www.carseat.org (go to aircraft travel); Helpline: 800-745-SAFE (7233)

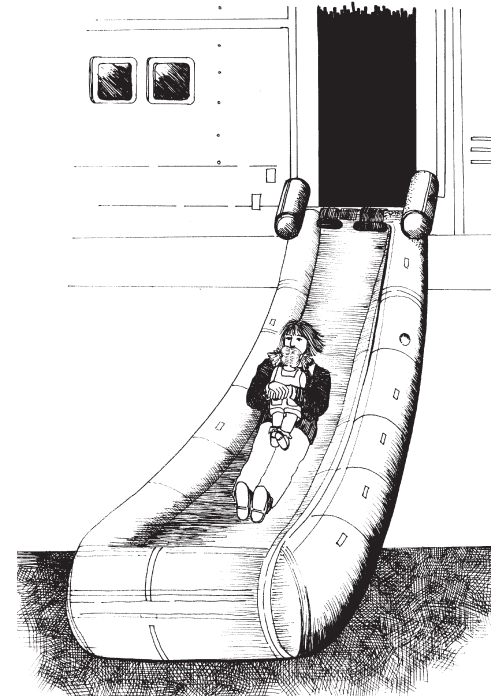
Transportation Security Administration: www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/children

Products:

Sit 'n' Stroll (car seat/stroller): www.lillygold.com

Diono (car seats that fold): www.diono.com

CARES: (harness for aircraft only): www.kidsfllysafe.com



Emergency escape with a small child:
Hold your child against your body, then jump out of the exit door onto the slide.