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Restraint of a 6-year-old in a Motor Vehicle Crash: Booster Seat vs. Lap Belt

Correct restraint: The simulation below shows there is minimal movement of a 6-year-old child properly restrained in a belt-positioning booster seat during a 35 m.p.h. crash.



Incorrect restraint: The same child, improperly restrained in an adult seat belt with the shoulder belt behind the back, is thrown forward dramatically in the same crash.* The inappropriate fit of the seat belt and lack of upper body restraint puts the child at risk for severe head, spine and abdominal injury.



** Placing the shoulder belt behind the back is a common and dangerous mistake children make when the shoulder belt doesn't fit properly.*

Children who have outgrown the highest weight or height limit allowed by their forward-facing child safety seat with a harness should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle lap and shoulder belt (adult seat belt) fits properly. This typically occurs when a child reaches 4 feet 9 inches in height and is between 8 and 12 years of age.