

Kindergarten Readiness: How to Know If Your Child Is Mature Enough To Sit In A Booster

Hi Parents! It is an exciting time, in your house, as you gear up to send one of your children to Hillcrest for Kindergarten! The staff are eagerly awaiting their arrival this Fall. My name is Kayla, I am a fellow Hillcrest parent, PAC board member and the Breakfast Program Coordinator. I have created this handout after seeing a gap in car seat safety in many children, ages 4 to 6. I am a certified [Child Passenger Safety Technician with CPSAC](#), a Canada wide certifying body. I have been doing this volunteer job for 5 years now. As I had children of my own, I realized how much was unknown about seats, how overwhelming the choices and changes can be and the large gap of education and knowledge around car seat safety and use is. I conduct car seat checks for all stages, from pregnancy, birth, infant and all the way up to booster age. Car seat checks are always done by donation, because as a CPSAC tech we would rather a child be safe than the resources inaccessible by care providers. You can reach me at kaylavann88@gmail.com if you would like to ask any further questions or book a check. I hope you are able to take something away from this handout, or further your prior knowledge of car seat safety. When we know better, we can do better, and keeping our kids safe on the roads is something I believe all parents want.

As a mom for 13 years, the largest gap in safety I see is in school age children. Many are in inappropriate seats for their ages or not in a seat at all. Below I have listed links to many great resources to help you make the safest choice for your child. Since all children grow at different rates and stages, some are in harnessed seats longer than others. The safest place for a Kindergarten age child, though, is in the back seat in a 5 point harness seat. Most children fit these seats until approximately 7 years old. A lot of parents, though, switch because they see the bare minimum requirements laid out by manufacturer guidelines. Unfortunately, these are bare minimums and as technicians we know this is not always the safest choice. Just because your child is 40lbs, does not make it safe, nor are they mature enough, to sit in a booster. Unfortunately, the statistics for car seat checks are that **9 out of 10** seats are either installed incorrectly or being misused - including a child in a booster before they should be. We all want what is best, for our children, and keeping them safe in the car and on the road is no different.

Please feel free to reach out to myself if you have any further questions. Salmon Arm is very lucky to have four wonderful techs so there are many of us who are willingly to answer questions, conduct checks and keep your kids as safe as can be!

- ***Booster seats reduce the risk of serious injury by 45%***
- ***7 out of 10 parents did not know, when surveyed, that their child must be at least 9 years old and/or 4'9 to be able to sit without a booster***
- ***To sit in a booster seat, children should:
Be mature enough to sit properly in the booster for the entire trip (no slouching, no leaning over, no messing with the seat belt). Have exceeded the height or weight limits on their harnessed car seat. Ideally, be at least age 5 (even though many boosters start at age 4). Weigh at least 40 pounds though many convertible and harness-to-booster car seats have harnesses rated to hold kids up to 65 pounds.***

Decision Making Tool: Harness, Booster or Belt?:

<https://vicarseattechs.com/2013/decision-making-tool-harness-booster-or-belt/>

To Booster or Not to Booter: Why Fit and Maturity Matter So Much:

<https://vicarseattechs.com/2012/to-booster-or-not-to-booster/>

Seat Belts are Designed for Adults: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLOJzG3oTQw>

Top 10 Booster Seat Tips: <https://vicarseattechs.com/2015/top-ten-booster-seat-tips/>

Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada: <https://www.cpsac.org/>

Vancouver Island Car Seat Technicians: <https://vicarseattechs.com/>

For more information or to contact myself or one of the other techs in the Shuswap area: <https://www.cpsac.org/find-a-tech/>

