

How safe is your family in your car?

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Only 10 to 20% of children between the ages of 4 and 7 are properly restrained when riding in a car? What makes them safe: a booster seat.

A booster seat raises the child up, ensuring that the seat belt fits properly over the chest and thighs. A standard seat belt, when fastened, falls across the face or neck of a child under 4'9", leaving him/her vulnerable to severe injuries. Tucking the shoulder strap under the child's arm is not a safe solution to the problem.

So if booster seats are the answer to the problem of safe car travel for these kids, then why aren't more kids riding in them? Lack of awareness is likely the answer. That's why the National Highway Safety Administration named this week, February 12th through the 18th, as National Child Passenger Safety Week in the hope of informing more parents and caregivers of the safe way to travel with small children.

Listed below are four helpful guidelines to help you make decisions about the safety of your kids. For more information, go to [boosterseat.gov](http://boosterseat.gov).

1. Use rear-facing infant seats in the back from birth to at least one year of age and at least 20 pounds;
2. Use forward-facing toddler seats in the back seat from age one and 20 pounds to about the age four and 40 pounds;
3. Use booster seats in the back seat from about age four to at least age eight- unless the child is 4'9" or taller; and
4. Use safety belts in the back seat at age eight or older or taller than 4'9".

As of February 12th, the Virginia House of Delegates gave their final approval to a bill requiring children up to eight years old to be restrained in a booster seat while riding in a vehicle. The bill is now on its way to Gov. Timothy M. Kaine for approval.