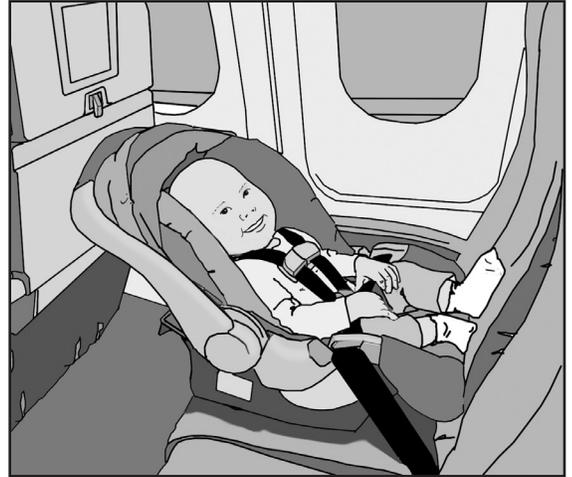


Safer Airplane Travel With Babies and Young Children

Child
Safety
Facts
2016

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 made 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?

A child who still fits in a car seat is safer riding in one on an airplane. The airplane lap belt provides some protection for children over age 2. However, a snug fit may not be possible. These options are much safer:

- **Rear-facing and forward-facing car seats** with harnesses: Use one that fits your child's size and age in the same way you do in a car. Most car seats are certified for use in aircraft, so look for a label that says so.
- **Aircraft-only devices:** CARES harness, for children 22–44 pounds, is FAA approved. Also, Special CARES is available for older passengers up to six feet tall who must ride with torso support. (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 car seat.)

What child safety devices cannot be used?

- **Booster seats or vests for use in cars.** These devices require the use of a lap-shoulder belt or tether anchor, which are not on airplanes. Gate-check the child's booster or vest and use the airplane lap belts to restrain the child while on the airplane. (An aircraft seat belt is likely to fit a child sooner than a lap belt in a motor vehicle.)
- **Avoid "belly belts,"** devices made to hold a child on an adult's lap. They may not be used during take-off and landing and do not protect babies well in a crash.

Turbulence Happens!
Make sure everyone in your family
is buckled up during the 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. (See 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. They are not allowed in exit rows (or rows behind or in front of exits on some planes). Consider sitting in a bulkhead row if extra space will be needed for a rear-facing convertible car seat.

*Make
Every Ride
A Safe Ride*



On the plane, use the safety device correctly!

- Follow manufacturer's instructions as closely as possible.
- Tighten the lap belt to secure the car seat. (Follow the manufacturer's directions for safely storing LATCH straps, which won't be used.)
- Tips for installing a forward-facing car seat:
 - Recline the aircraft seatback to make it easier to put the belt through the car seat belt path. Return the seatback to upright *after* tightening the belt.
 - When buckling, flip the belt over so the buckle flap is *toward the airplane seatback*. This makes it much easier to unbuckle later.
- Keep the harness buckled around your child during flight.

Flying with children under 2 years old

- Children under two are much safer in a crash or turbulence when riding in a car seat than on your lap. Also helpful: You will have the car seat for use after the flight, and can be sure it was not handled roughly. Often, a car seat with a stay-in-car base must be installed without the base when on an airplane.
- Although it does not recommend it, the FAA allows children under two to fly seated on a parent's lap. If you do this, check with the airline to see if it allows use of an empty seat for your child. Plan to gate-check your car seat in case you are allowed to use it in an empty seat. This is more likely if you fly during times when planes are less full.

Hints for easier travel with children in car seats

- For the best fit in aircraft seats, use a car seat less than 16 inches wide.
- If possible, raise the armrest for more space.
- 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.
- Consider car seats with special travel features (see Resources). Many car seats attach to strollers, and two become strollers outside a vehicle. Some car seat companies have products for wheeling or carrying car seats. Check car seat company websites.
- When making flight connections, talk to the airline in advance to set up help getting your children, car seats, and carry-ons to the next flight.
- Harness products made to hold a child on a parent's lap are NOT allowed for take-off and landing on U.S. flights, even if they claim to meet FAA standards.

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.

Resources

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

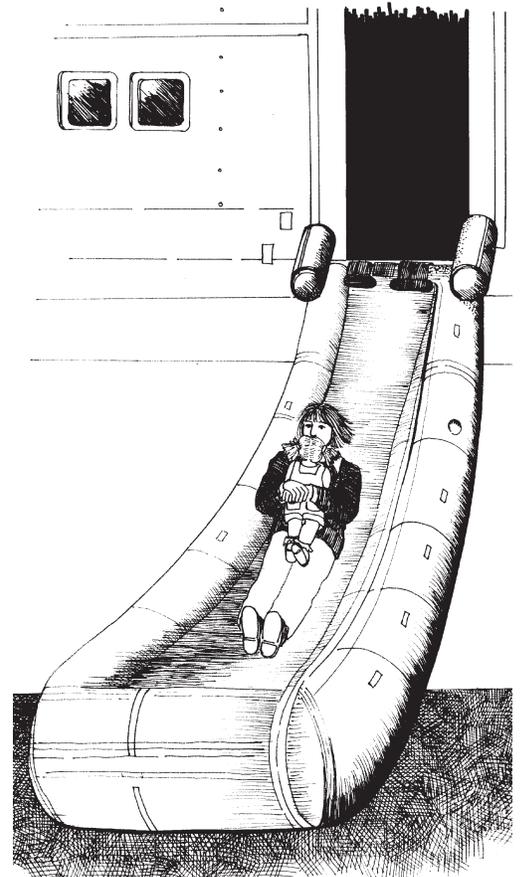
American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org (search: aircraft safety)

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.: www.carseat.org (click aircraft travel); Helpline: 800-745-SAFE (7233)

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/special-procedures/traveling-children>

CARES: (FAA-approved harnesses for aircraft only): www.kidsflysafe.com

For info on car seats that become strollers: www.lillygold.com (Sit 'n' Stroll) www.simpleparenting.co (Doona)



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