

Fitting advice for rear facing car seats

produced by Essex County Council Road Safety Officers
and www.rearfacing.co.uk

When choosing a child seat it is advisable to check the suitability of your car before you order or buy it. The best way to do this is to have it fitted in the car; and preferably by someone who has experience of children's safety in cars. It can be difficult to find someone appropriate near you, but getting the wrong seat can be an expensive mistake so we urge you to explore this possibility.

Car seat specific information

The space needed for rear facing seats is often considerable. Below are the measurements needed from the back of the rear seat to the back of the front seat.

More seats will be added as we receive them.

Maxi Cosi Mobi – 96cm/37"

BeSafe iZi Kid/Combi – 72cm/28"

Brio Zento – 86cm/34"

Recaro Polaric - 81cm/32"

Britax Multi-Tec - 79cm/31"

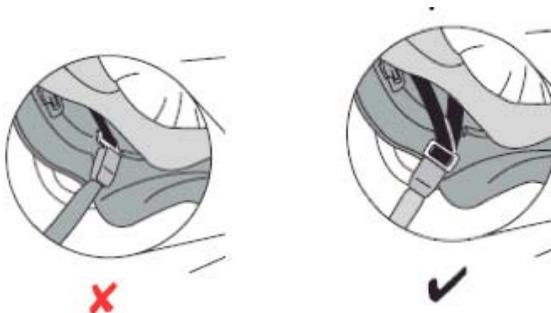
All the above measurements are approximate and dependent on the length of the vehicle seat.

Britax 2-Way Elite – 83cm/33"

Britax Nordic Secura – 84cm/33"

The seats were measured in recline so the space needed in the upright position would be less.

Make sure that no part of the buckle mechanism is pulled over the frame of the seat causing buckle crunch, when the seat belt is passed through the front of the seat (in an impact the buckle could fracture and release the seat).





Under floor storage boxes

Most of the rear facing seats have support legs and these should not be fitted into cars where there is under floor storage boxes as it is likely that the leg will punch through the floor in an impact. If the leg cannot reach the floor with the lid of the storage box removed a different seat should be purchased.

Recline angle

Some parents are concerned about the uprightness of the rear facing seats when fitted in the car. This often occurs when there is a steep rake on the seat, in other words the seat that you sit on is not flat but tips back slightly (known as anti submarine). Although this in itself is not a safety issue in an accident or otherwise, a degree of recline is desirable, especially when the child is sleeping. Where a baby under 1 year is concerned it is advisable that a good recline is achieved to allow their airway to remain open but no seat should be reclined at more than 45 degrees. Unfortunately this aspect is difficult to advise on without seeing the seat fitted to the car.

It is inadvisable to place anything under the seat to either improve the fit or alter the angle of the seat. These products are not crash tested to the European standard so we cannot guarantee their safety when used in conjunction with a car seat.

Try before you buy

If you are unable to visit the centre in Essex or a retailer stocking rear facing car seats (see the Buyer's Guide on www.rearfacing.co.uk), it may be possible for the Road Safety Officers at the Essex Centre to try the seats in a vehicle similar to your car to get an idea of the fit. Please be aware that there can be slight differences from car to car even within the same make and model, so at best this can only be seen as a guideline.

Fitting the child in the seat

When fitting the child into the seat, the harness must be correctly adjusted. The harness should be positioned at shoulder height or slightly below shoulder height as this will hold the child down in the seat. The harness must be tight enough so that only the flat of two fingers can be slid under at chest level.

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Essex County Council Road Safety Officers

The centre is open Tuesdays 12.30–15.00 and Fridays 10.30–15.00 and is situated at Lubards Farm, Hullbridge Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 9QG. You can reach the centre on 01268 297593 (leave a message on the answer machine if there isn't anyone available to take your call).

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