

When can my child ride in the front seat?

The child restraint law says, “*The driver of a vehicle transporting a child who is under 13 years old shall transport the child in the back seat positions in the vehicle where it is practical to do so.*”

What does this mean?

What many parents/caregivers hear is: *All children must ride in the back seat until the child is 13.* The words “where practical” are often misunderstood/overlooked.

When is it acceptable for a child to ride in the front seat, keeping in mind the words “where practical”?

- A pickup truck with no back seat.
- A pickup truck with side facing jump seats (as these are not permitted for use with any child restraint).
- Any passenger vehicle where all rear seating positions are in use by other children and a child must, by default, ride in the front seat.
- Many two seat sports cars. *Always* read the owner’s manual as some sport cars *never* permit a child under twelve to ride in the front seat.
- When a child rides in a booster seat (which must be used with a lap and shoulder belt) and the vehicle has lap-only belts in all rear seating positions.

When is it NEVER permitted for a child less than 13 years of age to ride in the front seat?

- A rear facing child restraint (infant or convertible) is placed where there is a frontal air bag unless an air bag on/off switch disables the air bag and there is permission in the vehicle manual to place a rear facing child seat in that location.
- As a matter of privilege. For example: child sits up front to better visit with parent; as a reward for some action; or, because they called “*shotgun!*”

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