

Better Safe Than Sorry

A Fotonovela About the Importance
of Using Child Safety Seats




Health Net®

Health Net wants you to know how important it is to protect your children by using the right child safety seat or booster seat every time your children ride in a car. Please contact the organizations listed on the Resource List for correct guidance on child seat use. Here are some important things to know:


- All states require children to use child safety seats and safety belts. It's the law!
- In California, as of 2002, children must ride in a child safety seat or booster until they are at least six-years old or weigh at least 60 lbs., with some exceptions.
- Always buy **new** child safety seats for your children. Used seats are often dangerous due to damaged or missing parts.
- Follow instructions for correct child safety seat use.
- Infants and children are safest in the back seat. Never put a baby in the the front seat if there is a passenger air bag. Air bags have killed babies.
- Place the child safety seat so the baby faces the rear of the car until he or she is at least age one and 20 pounds. However, it is safer to keep the baby facing the rear for as long as possible.
- Buckle up on every ride. Never allow children to sit on people's laps.
- Until age three or four, children need a child safety seat with a harness. Older children who are not big enough to fit in just a safety belt need a booster seat. **Take the 5-Step Test** to see if your child belongs in a booster seat (see page 6).
- Be a good role model: If you use your safety belt, children will learn from you.
- If your car has no shoulder belts in the back seat, you will need more information. Call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. at **1-800-745-7233**.

Jorge and Luz have just picked up Grandma. She wants to buy party favors for her granddaughter's quinceañera*...



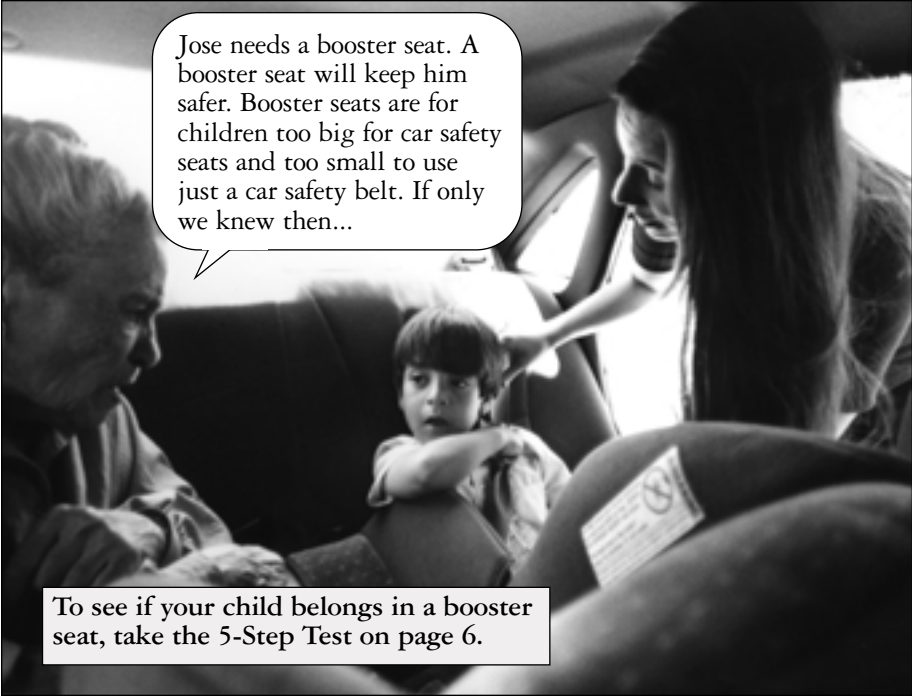
I am so proud of Blanca, my eldest grandchild! Her quinceañera is only two weeks away! I hope we can find pretty party favors for the tables.

*A quinceañera is a girl's fifteenth birthday celebration.



Jose, sit still, Son.

The belt bothers me, Mama.
Look, it rubs on my face!



Jose needs a booster seat. A booster seat will keep him safer. Booster seats are for children too big for car safety seats and too small to use just a car safety belt. If only we knew then...

To see if your child belongs in a booster seat, take the 5-Step Test on page 6.



What do you mean by that, Grandma?

That's enough, Luz. Don't ask her to live through it again.

It's okay, my son. If it will keep the rest of the little ones in our family safe, it's a story that I'll tell over and over again.



You see, Luz, it happened when Jorge's eldest brother, Raul started his family. Raul and Lupita had two little ones — just like you and Jorge.

I thought they only had Blanca!



Nobody in the family likes to talk about this terrible tragedy... But this is the way it happened... One day Raul and Lupita took the children for a ride. They didn't go very far, just to the mall that was close to their house. They only had one car seat. Since Blanca was a newborn, they buckled her into their only car seat and placed her in the back seat. Their boy, Raulito, was just 18-months old! Lupita held him on her lap.

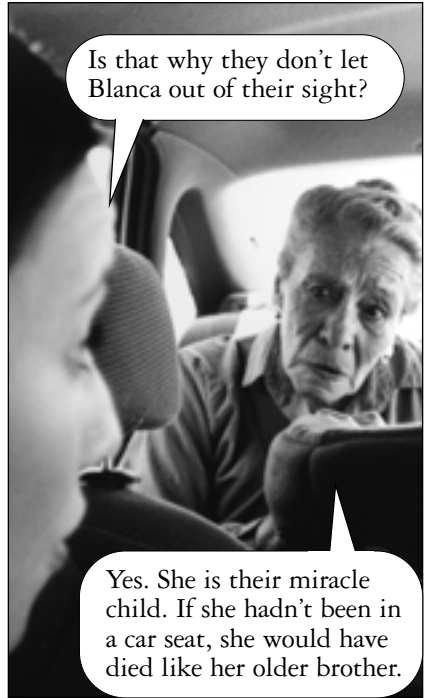
Oh, no!



They thought Raulito would be safe in his mother's arms. As the family was leaving the parking lot at the mall, a car crashed into them. Blanca, who was in the safety seat, was okay. She only had a scratch or two. Raulito died from a broken neck, even before I could get to the hospital.



Is that why they don't let Blanca out of their sight?



Yes. She is their miracle child. If she hadn't been in a car seat, she would have died like her older brother.

I am so sorry, Grandma. You would have had four beautiful grandchildren.



I am happy I have these three to love, but you can imagine how I feel about Blanca.

Luz on the verge of tears...

No wonder this quinceañera is so special. I feel sorry for Raul and Lupita. They lost their beautiful boy!

If we learn this lesson, we can keep our babies safe. Okay, let me buckle up!



Jorge, I see a store up ahead. Why don't we go inside and get a booster seat for Jose?



Check the Resource List for more information about how to use child safety seats correctly. You can also find out the location of the nearest safety seat checkup event.

Here are three different types of safety seats.



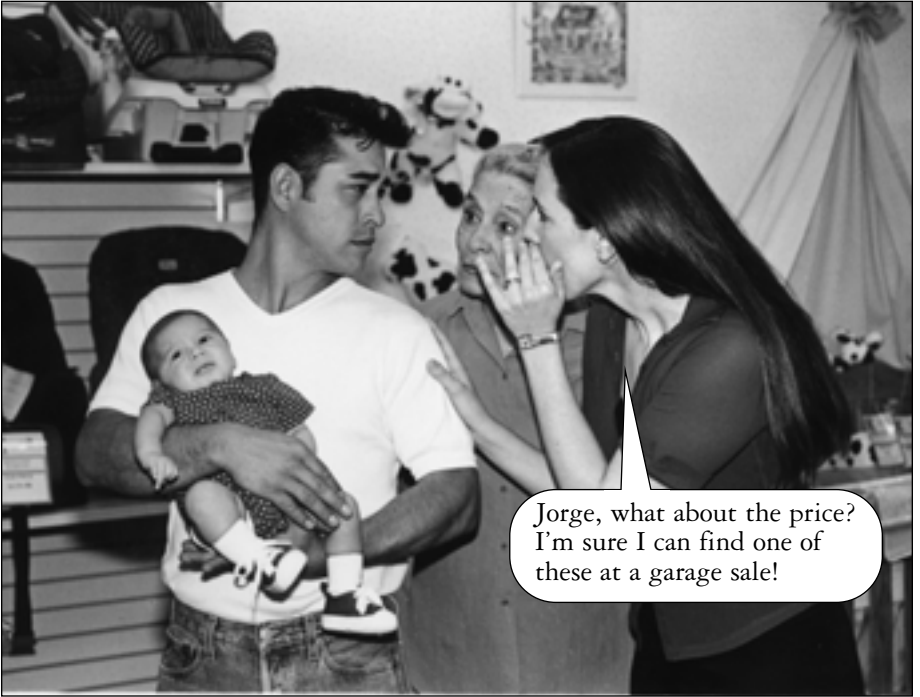
Convertible Seat set up for toddlers



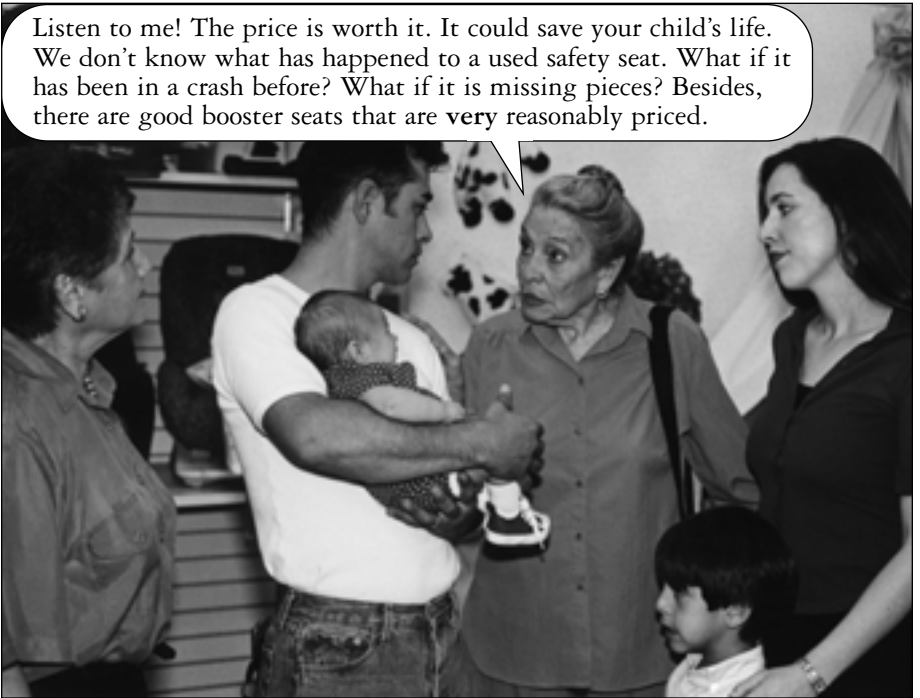
Infant-Only Safety Seat



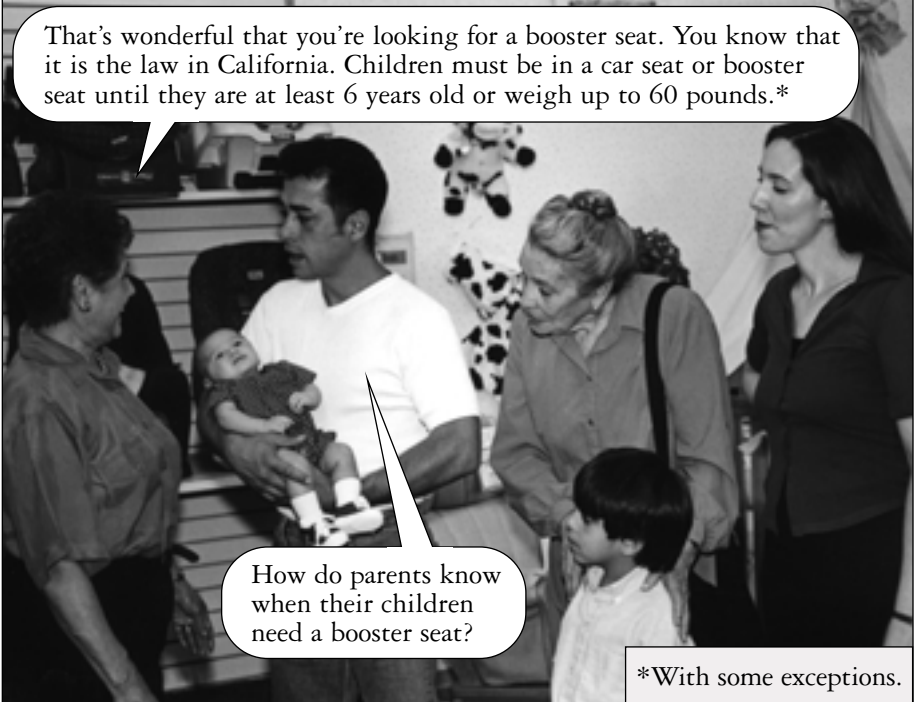
Booster Seat



Jorge, what about the price?
I'm sure I can find one of
these at a garage sale!




Listen to me! The price is worth it. It could save your child's life.
We don't know what has happened to a used safety seat. What if it
has been in a crash before? What if it is missing pieces? Besides,
there are good booster seats that are **very** reasonably priced.



That's wonderful that you're looking for a booster seat. You know that it is the law in California. Children must be in a car seat or booster seat until they are at least 6 years old or weigh up to 60 pounds.*

How do parents know when their children need a booster seat?

*With some exceptions.



Here are some questions you need to ask yourself. We call it the 5-Step Test.

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and the arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to ride safely in the car. Children like boosters. They are more comfortable in them!

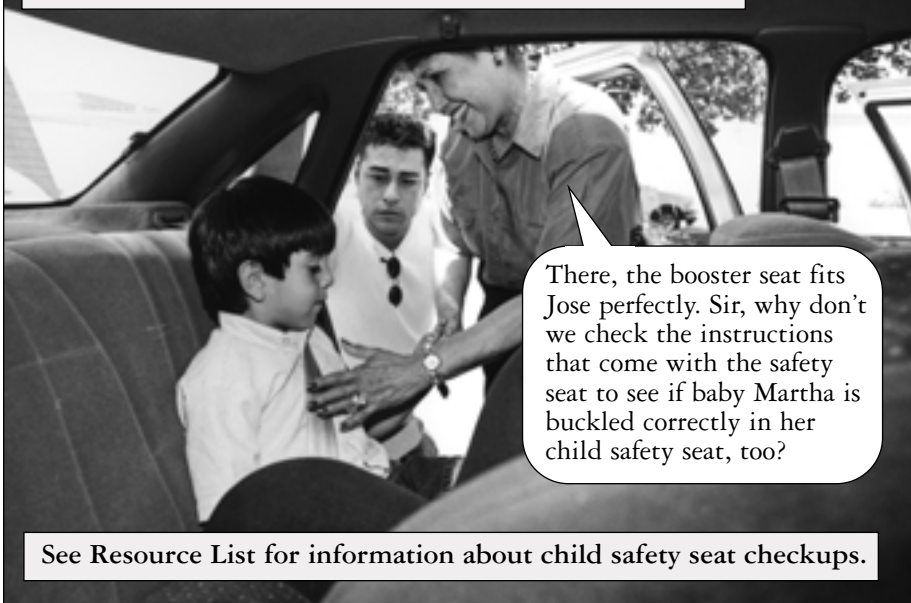
Provided by permission of SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

Child safety seats, including boosters, are affordable. Some cities, hospitals, or health plans have programs that also give child safety seats, through vouchers, for free, or at low cost.



See Resource List for sources of free or low-cost safety seats.

The saleswoman has helped the family install their new booster seat. A child is safest in the back seat of the car.



There, the booster seat fits Jose perfectly. Sir, why don't we check the instructions that come with the safety seat to see if baby Martha is buckled correctly in her child safety seat, too?

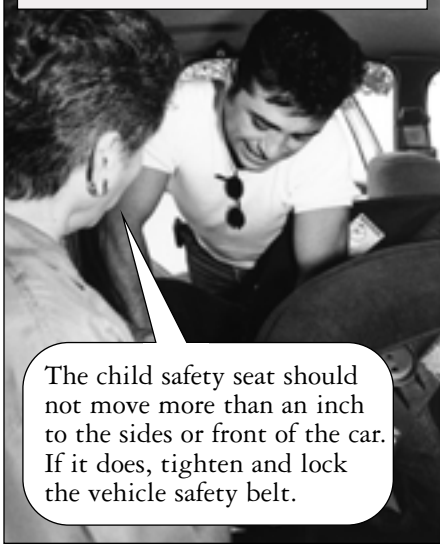
See Resource List for information about child safety seat checkups.

Infants and children are safest in the back seat. Place the child safety seat so the baby faces the rear of the car. Children may face forward after age one and 20 pounds.

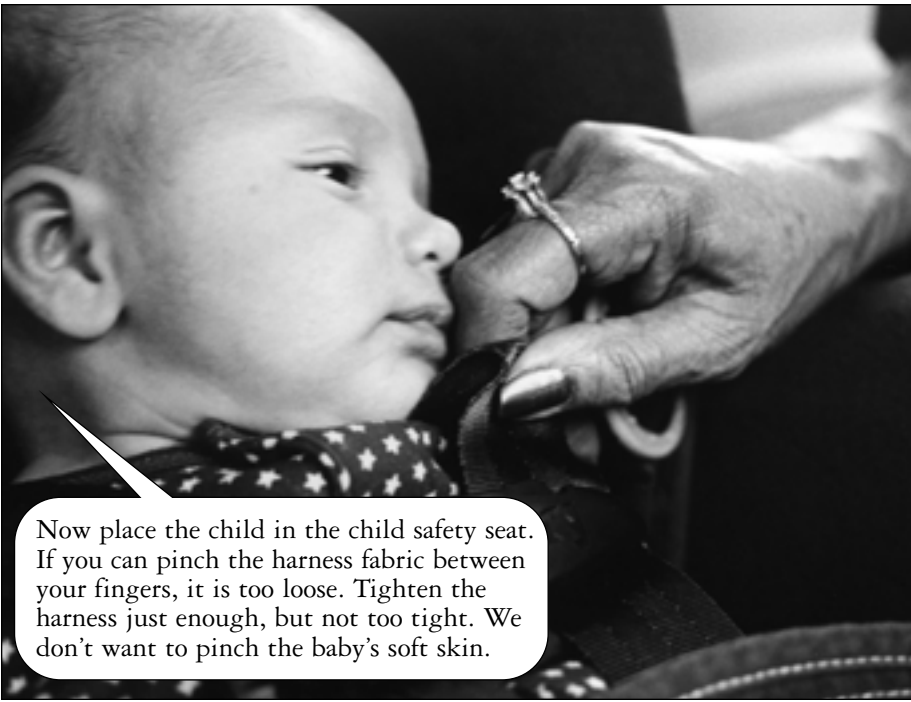


To find out how to install the child safety seat correctly, follow the instructions in the safety seat instruction booklet and the automobile owner's manual.


Tip: Put your hand into the child safety seat and use the weight of your body to press down while you tighten the safety belt.



The child safety seat should not move more than an inch to the sides or front of the car. If it does, tighten and lock the vehicle safety belt.



Now place the child in the child safety seat. If you can pinch the harness fabric between your fingers, it is too loose. Tighten the harness just enough, but not too tight. We don't want to pinch the baby's soft skin.



Always follow the directions that come with a child safety seat. If you can't find the directions for your child safety seat, call the manufacturer. If you need help using your seat correctly, call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.

If you have questions about safety seats or safety belts, call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. 1-800-745-7233 (English) or 1-800-747-7266 (Spanish).



Two weeks later...



Resource List

How do I get a child safety seat for my child?

- Send in the reply card in this brochure to enter a prize drawing for a free child safety seat.
- **If you are a member of the community:**
County health departments in California can refer you to other programs for no-cost or low-cost child safety seats. Look up the number for your county health department in the government pages of your phone book.
- **If you are a Health Net Medi-Cal member:**
If you live in the Los Angeles area and need a child safety seat, call Health Net at 1-310-323-5404 to participate in the General Motors child safety seat program.
- **Retail Stores** –You can buy child safety seats at discount stores, department stores or baby furniture stores. The right seat is the one that fits your child and your car.

Who has more information on child safety seats?

- **National Safe Kids Buckle Up Program bilingual information line** on upcoming local car seat checkup events: 1-800-441-1888.
- **SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.'s Safe Ride Helpline:** 1-800-745-7233 (English) or 1-800-747-7266 (Spanish) – A resource for questions about child safety seats and car seat recalls.
- **Department of Transportation (DOT) Auto Safety Hotline:** 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236). A resource for child passenger safety tips and recalls. Bilingual staff.
- **Internet resources:**
<http://www.carseat.org> or <http://www.healthnet.com> or <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/>

Turn over the novela to read in Spanish!

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