

# Car and Car Seat Safety

Car and Car Seat safety are common concerns for many parents of children and youth with special healthcare needs (CYSHCN). Many CYSHCN require specialized equipment to ensure their safety when traveling. The [Automotive Safety Program at Indiana University School of Medicine](#) has resources available for families to learn more about how to safely travel with their child(ren). They identify [two main categories of child passenger safety restraints](#):

1. Conventional Child Passenger Safety Restraints
  - Rear-Facing Only Seats
  - Convertible Seats
  - Forward Facing Seats
  - Belt Positioning Booster Seat
2. Specialized or Adaptive Child Passenger Safety Restraints
  - Car Beds
  - Specialized Rear-Facing Only Seats for Children with Omphaloceles
  - Specialized Convertible Seats for Children in Hip Casts
  - Large Medical Seats
  - Adaptive Booster Seats and Positioning Devices
  - Vests

They also discuss additional travel safety considerations, including adapted vehicles and wheelchair use. More information on special needs child passenger safety restraints can be found in their [Frequently Asked Questions](#) guide and their [Considerations for Restraint Selection](#) guide (broken down alphabetically by medical condition diagnosis). Please contact Indiana Family to Family with any additional questions about child safety seats and/or adaptive equipment for CYSHCN at [info@inf2f.org](mailto:info@inf2f.org) or 844-F2F-INFO (844-323-4636).

[The Safety Store](#) at Riley Children's Hospital offers low car safety products to families, including conventional car seats, car sun shades, car emergency escape tools, and medical emergency kits. Safety Store employees are trained educators, and they are able to provide families with safety advice, product suggestions, and free educational materials. Families can contact [The Safety Store](#) online or at 317-274-6565.

Car Safety experts agree that in addition to selecting the appropriate child safety restraints for CYSHCN, parents also need to ensure that their child's safety equipment is being properly installed and utilized. There are many free child safety seat clinics around the state that offer car seat inspections by a certified inspector.

For more information, contact Indiana Family to Family.

1-844-343-4636

[www.inf2f.org](http://www.inf2f.org)

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These Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) can not only check to see if a child safety seat has been properly installed, but they can also teach parents how to correctly install seats and utilize safety equipment on their own. Free clinics can be found through many major health or hospital organizations, as well as through many police and fire departments. A few programs with clinics throughout the state include:

- [Franciscan Health Car Seat Safety Program](#)
- [Riley Automotive Safety Program](#)
- [Safe Kids Indiana](#)

When teaching CYSHCN about the importance of car and child seat safety, social stories and videos can be a helpful tool for many families. There are many social stories and videos available online:

- [Safety Wherever I Go](#) (Carol Gray)
- [Wearing My Safety Belt](#) (Kohl's Cares and Children's Specialized Hospital)
- [Social Stories: Riding in the Car](#) (Social Stories, YouTube)

Families can also [create their own social story](#) to personalize information and photos for their own child. Additionally, [Indiana Family to Family Pinterest](#) has a board specifically dedicated to safety resource information.

### **Educational Resources for Parents of CYSHCN**

There are many additional educational tools available to help parents and caregivers learn more about car and car seat safety for CYSHCN.

- [Indiana's Child Restraint Laws](#) (Indiana State Police)
- [The National Center for the Safe Transportation of Children with Special Healthcare Needs](#) (Automotive Safety Program, IU)
- [The Safety Store Educational Resources](#) (Riley Children's Hospital)
- [State of Indiana: Child Traffic Safety](#) (Indiana Criminal Justice Institute)
- [What's New in Special Needs Transportation](#) (Automotive Safety Program, IU)

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Programs and systems change often. It is important to ensure that you are using the most current information. This fact sheet was updated October 2023. Please check <https://www.inf2f.org/fact-sheets.html> for the most recent edition.

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