A GUIDE TO THE IOWA
CHILD RESTRAINT LAW

Iowa Code 321.446, Data Code 198a - as of July 2010

Key Points:

- A child under 1 year old and weighing less than 20 lbs. must be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system.
- A child age 1 up to 6 years old must be secured in a child restraint system (a safety seat or booster seat—NOT a seat belt).
- A child from age 6 up to age 11 must be secured in a child restraint system or by a safety belt.
- Rear seat occupants up to age 18 must be secured by a safety belt.

A “child restraint system” is a specially designed seating system, including a belt positioning seat or a booster seat that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards.

- The misdemeanor fine is $100.00, plus costs (non-moving violation) totaling at least $195.00.
- The law applies to both residents and non-residents of Iowa.
- The child restraint system must be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.
- The child must be secured in the child restraint and the child restraint must be properly secured to the vehicle.
- Non-use of a child restraint is probable cause to stop a vehicle.
- An officer may investigate a suspected violation.
- For unrestrained passengers age 0-13, the driver receives the citation, and for unrestrained passengers 14-17, the passenger receives the citation.
- 1st offense citation will not result in conviction if driver “produces in court” proof of acquisition of child restraint.

Exceptions:

- Children certified by a physician as having a medical, physical or mental disability making restraint use inadvisable.
- Children on bus, including a school bus.
- Children riding on motorcycles.
- Children transported in authorized emergency vehicles.
- Children transported by peace officers on official duty.
- Children riding in motor homes except if riding in the front passenger seat (where they must be restrained).
- Children for whom a seat belt is not available due to all other belts being used (example: 4th child in back seat with only 3 belts).

This is only a guide, provided through the courtesy of

Iowa Governor’s Traffic Safety Bureau
Department of Public Safety

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A GUIDE TO SAFELY TRANSPORTING CHILDREN IN A MOVING VEHICLE

COMMON CHILD SAFETY SEAT MISUSES:
- Seat installed too loose
- Improper seating position (in front of an air bag)
- Not buckling child into restraint
- Not securely anchoring the child restraint to the vehicle
- Improper seat for child’s age and size
- Infant riding forward facing
- Harness retainer clip not at armpit level
- Loose harness straps

To graduate to an adult belt -- a child must be able to sit with their back/buttocks against the seat and with their knees bent at the edge of the seat. The belt system must be snug across the center of the child's chest and across their lap at the hips.

NATIONALLY RECOMMENDED STANDARDS FOR SAFE USE OF CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFANTS</th>
<th>TODDLER/ PRESCHOOL</th>
<th>YOUNG CHILDREN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>Birth to 1 year Up to 20-22 lbs.</td>
<td>Over 1 year 20-40 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Seat</td>
<td>Infant only or rear-facing convertible</td>
<td>Convertible or Forward-facing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seat Position</td>
<td>Rear-facing only</td>
<td>Forward-facing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always Make Sure</td>
<td>Children to one year AND at least 20 lbs. in rear-facing seats Harness straps should be at or below shoulder level</td>
<td>Harness straps should be at or above shoulders Most seats require top slot for forward facing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WARNING
- Do not place infants in the front passenger seat of cars with air bags
- All children under age 13 should ride in the back seat
- Make sure the lap belt fits low and tight to avoid abdominal injuries

For further information on child restraints, contact the Iowa Child Passenger Safety Helpline 1-800-258-6419
For Certified Child Passenger Technicians & Child Restraint Checks Visit this Website: www.blankchildrens.org/cps