

Travel safely with young children

The best way to travel safely with child passengers is to

- buckle them up in an approved, correctly fitted child restraint or booster seat that is suitable for their age and size
- check they are buckled up correctly –
 - o the straps are straight, not twisted, and are clear of the child's face
 - o the fit is snug, not loose
- make sure they sit in the back seat (see [NSW Road Rules 266.3/3A](#))

Before you leave, make buckling up a positive experience

- talk together about the need for all passengers to buckle up and stay buckled up, awake or asleep, no matter how short the journey
- agree on simple rules for all the children and adults in the car. For example:
 - o if anyone unbuckles, the car stops
 - o stay buckled up until an adult unbuckles your restraint or booster

¹ Koppel, S. Charlton, J. Kopinathan, C. & Taranto, D. (2011). Are child occupants a significant source of driving distraction? *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 43(3), 1236-1244.

² Haque, M. M. & Washington, S. (2013). Effects of mobile phone distraction on drivers' reaction times. *Journal of the Australasian College of Road Safety*, 24(3), 20-29.

Avoid distractions as you travel

Many activities distract drivers. Some are child-related – checking on them, chatting with them, passing them food/drinks, etc. To reduce driver distraction, keep your children busy or pull over if they become distressed.

Other distractions include talking with front seat passengers, eating/drinking, grooming, adjusting mirrors, technology-related. These can distract drivers for around 18% of a journey.¹ Conversations on hands-free or handheld mobile phones distract drivers by shifting their attention away from the primary driving task.² Avoid distractions during your journey – keep your eyes on the road to significantly reduce potential crash and injury risks.¹

Enjoy your travel with young children

Plan ahead!

Wherever possible, plan long journeys to fit in with your children's sleep patterns. When they are awake, keep them busy and happy with activities they enjoy.

Take breaks regularly!

On a long journey, take a 15 minute break every two hours. Revive at safe stopping locations such as country towns, scenic points, service centres, parks and roadside rest areas. Plan your rest stops with the [online interactive Rest Area Map](#) for NSW. During major holiday periods and long weekends, [Driver Reviver stops](#) operate throughout Australia. When these are open, they offer some free refreshments for all to enjoy.