



Car Seats

The Law, Regulations and Technical Information

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What the law says

Since May 2006, it is compulsory to use safety belts and child restraint systems in all vehicles in Europe (Directive 2003/20/EC). It is also mandatory to use child car seats within the EU for children up to the heights of 1.35m or 1.5m - depending upon the member state.

Child Safety Standard – ECE label

All car seats must display an ECE R44/04 certification label to indicate they comply with standard safety requirement.

At It's a Baby Ltd we only stock and supply products that comply with the European Test Standard for Child Restraints ECE R 44 introduced in 1982.

From April 2008, all child car seats that were manufactured before 1995 and approved to the ECE R Standard Regulations 44/01 and 44/02 are no longer legal and must not be used.

Explanation of the ECE-label

1. shows for which category the child seat has been approved
2. approved for weight
3. "Y" shows that this child seat has a 5-point harness system with crotch strap
4. European Approval indicator
5. indication for country in which the approval was obtained (1=Germany, 2=France, 3=Italy, 4=the Netherlands etc.)
6. Approval number. The first two numbers show to which version ECE R 44 the child seat has been approved (in this case ECE R 44/04)
7. current number



Child Safety Standard – ECE Standard

Extracts from the ECE Standard

European experts have determined five groups for child restraint systems, classified by the weight of the child:

ECE R 44/03 and 44/04 Groups		
Group 0	under 10 kg	(up to approx. 9 months)
Group 0+	under 13 kg	(up to approx. 15 months)
Group I	9 - 18 kg	(approx. 8 months - 3 1/2 years)
Group II	15 - 25 kg	(approx. 3 - 7 years)
Group III	22 - 36 kg	(approx. 6 - 12 years)

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The following criteria are part of the current ECE Standard and have to be met to obtain the approval for the child car seat:

Operating & Using Criteria	
a) Buckle Opening Forces	without load 4 - 8 kp (40 - 80 N) under load max. 8 kp (80 N)
b) Belt Length Adjuster	adjustment force max. 5 kp (50 N)
c) Adjustment from upright into reclined position	without belt length adjustment
No metal on body / no sharp edges	-

Sled Test Criteria	
a) Test Speed	Frontal Impact: 50 km/h Rear Impact: 30 km/h
b) Maximum permissible head forward movement horizontal (forward facing)	Groups I, II, III: 550 mm Group I ISOFIX universal with TopTether: 500 mm
horizontal (rearward facing)	Group 0: 600 mm Groups 0+ and I: 650 mm
verticle	all Groups: 800 mm
c) Maximum chest deceleration	resulting deceleration (Res): 55 g vertical (direction towards the head): 30 g
d) Abdominal load	no clay print
e) Motion sequence	evaluation of film

Car and child car seat approvals

There are 3 types of car seat approvals: universal, semi-universal and vehicle specific. This allows you to know if a seat fits your car and is approved to the safety standards for it. Universal approval isn't vehicle specific, and the seat is approved for installation in all cars. You should however check that the seat fits really well in your vehicle.

Universal approval

The seat is approved for use in all vehicles that meet ECE R14 and R16 regulations. In the case of ISOFIX the child seat **MUST** have the TopTether connected to the car's anchorage points. In all ISOFIX cases this solution must be used and the vehicle's handbook must state that the car is suitable for "Universal ISOFIX Child Seats".

Semi-universal approval

Semi-universal approval is when, in addition to any standard requirements, other safety devices for attaching a seat are used and require additional testing. For example: some cars provide additional storage space within or beneath the floor area that can influence the behaviour of a foot prop, therefore you need to check if your car appears on the vehicle list.

Vehicle specific approval

The car seat is tested in an additional car-specific dynamic crash test and approved only for these cars. The car **MUST** appear on the child seat manufacturer's application list (vehicle lists are available on the Britax website- www.BRITAX.eu). This may include special features or designs that can only be installed in a car of a specific type.