



# CHILD RESTRAINTS AND BOOSTER SEATS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

ELAA has been tasked by VicRoads and TAC to develop a video resource that will be available to parents, carers, educators and anyone who is transporting children in cars.

For Australian children, road trauma is the number 1 killer. Around 3,000 children are injured on our roads each year. Research conducted in Australia shows that if you put children in the right fitting restraint – right for their age – but more importantly, for their size, many of these deaths and injuries can be prevented.

For the past six years ELAA has been delivering Victoria's early childhood *Starting Out Safely* program for VicRoads. As part of our work we have spoken to many parents, educators and people transporting children and have heard the message repeatedly that there is a great deal of confusion regarding child restraints and how to transport children safely.

VicRoads and TAC asked ELAA to produce an instructional video based on our work and research around the community's knowledge about how to safely transport children in cars.

We took up the initiative and have produced a video that will clarify a number of misconceptions. We drew on the work of Neuroscience Research Australia and the *Best Practice Guidelines for the Safe Restraint of Children Travelling in Motor Vehicles*. Our aim was to have an up-to-date resource that is based on research that is appropriate for all Australian states and accessible to parents, educators, medical professionals and others transporting children.

## Engaging and expert presenters

ELAA asked Associate Professor Warwick Teague, Director of Trauma Service at the Royal Children's Hospital, to assist with the content and to be one of the main presenters, bringing his passion for keeping children safe and out of the Emergency Department of his hospital.

Warwick Teague said "In my work ... we strive towards zero ... zero deaths... zero injuries ... so one death or one injury is one too many and, if we can prevent them, which we know we can, it's important we take those steps. It's vital that we choose the right child restraints for our children and use them correctly every time we travel in a car, whether going around the corner or on a long drive."

The video is narrated by TV journalist, presenter and columnist, Elise Elliott, in a clear non-technical style that is engaging and easy to understand. She brings her experience as a mother of a seven-year-old girl; her interactions with other parents; and an understanding of peer pressure to the production.

"What the law says and what research says are often quite different and conflicting. As a mum I often get confused about what child restraints are right – as do many parents I know. This video will help clear up some of those mixed messages."

## Easy to understand information that could save a child's life

The video addresses a number of key questions related to children and child restraints, effectively illustrating and reinforcing critical messages including:

- how seat belts and child restraints work and protect against the forces generated in a crash
- why a child's need for an appropriate child restraint should be assessed in relation to the child's size, not their age
- how to choose the most appropriate restraint
- when is it safe for a child to use an adult seat belt?
- how to become confident in fitting a child restraint in your own vehicle.

## How can I access the new video?

The video will be able to be accessed and downloaded via the *Starting Out Safely* website [childroadsafety.org.au](http://childroadsafety.org.au). We are also producing a number of supporting resources including a series of interviews with new parents, a grandparent, a restraint fitter and VicRoads.

The [childroadsafety.org.au](http://childroadsafety.org.au) website also includes valuable links to:

- research on child restraints and keeping children safe
- information resources on child restraints in 22 languages.

*“You could never live with yourself if anything happened to one of your grandchildren. Find out what the rules are, find out how the restraints work, practise on them before you drive anywhere, make sure that the child’s parents are there to check because they’ve done it more times than you have. That gives you the confidence that they feel that their child is safe.”*

David (Grandfather)

*“Take your time, know your child restraint parameters and don’t feel pressured to move your child either out of the restraint or into the front seat before they are tall enough to be moved.”*

Kate (mother)

*“From a VicRoads point of view we want to make sure that every child is safe when they’re travelling in a vehicle. And the safest way for a young child to travel would be in a child restraint or a booster seat that fits their size.”*

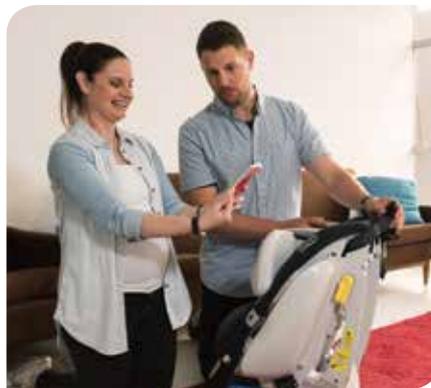
Jana Leckel (Policy Advisor, VicRoads)

*“There are a lot of websites, chat rooms and forums that provide conflicting advice. You don’t know who has the expertise and knowledge. Having a video supported by VicRoads and TAC you can be sure that you are getting the best advice.”*

Carrie (new mother)

*“Once you have more than two children and depending on their ages, your choice of cars is reduced. This video made me aware that children need to be in a child restraint for much longer than I believed. It’s much more important to keep them in a restraint than to put them in an adult seatbelt in order to save space in the car.”*

Sonali (mother of five boys)



Clockwise from top: The video production crew filmed on location at the Royal Children’s Hospital; ELAA RSE Project Manager, Zora Marko (right), provided technical consultancy on the use of child restraints during the production of the video; A key message in the video is ensuring your child is wearing an appropriate restraint for their height; And action! Elise Elliot and Warwick Teague during the video shoot; The video emphasises the importance of reading the manufacturer’s instructions when using a child restraint for the first time; Associate Professor Warwick Teague brings his passion for keeping children safe to the video.