

## Gearing up for the season: Hockey Gear & Car Seats

The long-awaited hockey season is just around the corner. With last year's season cut short, coaches, kids and parents are looking forward to returning to the rink.

Hockey parents can all agree, rushing to the rink on time, navigating the chaos of the change room and getting their player suited up, is hectic on a good day. With social distancing regulations in place it's tempting to suit up your player before arriving at the rink- while hockey gear is designed to keep kids safe on the ice, it can potentially put them at risk in the vehicle. Shoulder and chest pads, padded pants and other hockey gear will impact the harness or seatbelt fit, significantly reducing its effectiveness.



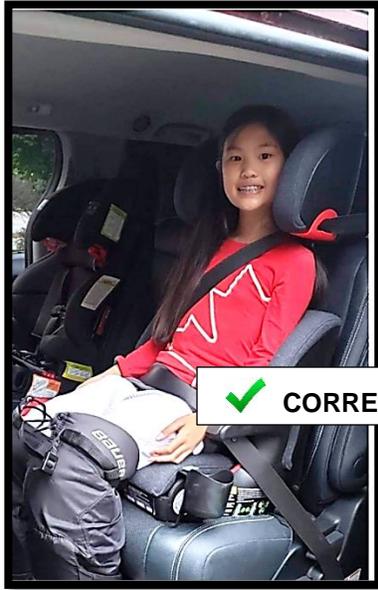
As seen above, wearing padding in a vehicle, will significantly affect seatbelt fit. Shoulder strap is incorrectly sitting too low on the child's arm, and the belt is fitted to hockey gear rather than the child's body.

Did you know motor vehicle collisions are one of the leading causes of death in children?<sup>1</sup> In Ontario, children must use a car seat or booster seat until 145 cm (4'9") tall OR 36 kg (80 lbs) OR 8 years old. The proper use of seatbelts and car seats significantly reduces the chances of injury.

The lap belt should cross low over the hips -not the stomach or thighs. Harness straps should be at or slightly above the shoulder for forward facing car seats.

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<sup>1</sup> [Statistics Canada](#)



Wearing base layers and waiting to put upper body gear on at the rink, will insure a properly fitting seatbelt.

Bulky clothing, including winter coats and sporting gear, should not be worn underneath the harness or seatbelt.

In a collision, harnesses and seatbelts can only tighten to the hockey equipment or fluffy jacket, leaving extra space under the harness/seatbelt.

Failing to ensure proper fit, may result in the child being ejected in the case of a collision. Under Ontario's *Highway Traffic Act*, failing to ensure that children are properly secured will result in significant penalties.

Although you are likely facing new protocols such as limits on the number of players allowed in a changeroom, remember that safety trumps convenience.

Allow for more time to gear up at the rink. Dress your player in base layers for the commute to the rink and ensure they are properly secured in the appropriate car seat for their age, weight and height.

As their #1 fan, keep them safe both on and off the ice. Go Team!

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To learn more about car seat safety visit [Ontario.ca/Carseats](https://Ontario.ca/Carseats).  
Questions or concerns? [Email me](#)

