

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

The long-awaited hockey season is just around the corner. With last year's season being cut short, coaches, kids and parents, alike, 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. To save time and avoid congestion, some parents chose to dress their players in hockey gear in the comfort of their own home and arrive at the arena ready to play. With new protocols and social distancing regulations in place, now more than ever, the thought of showing up at the rink already suited up, is appealing to parents.



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.

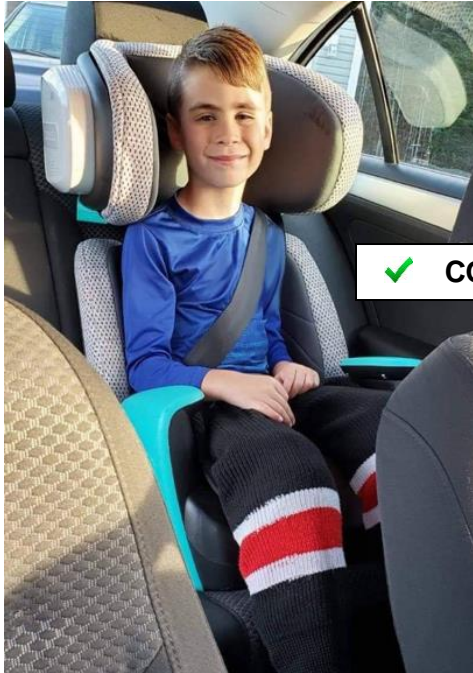
Although hockey gear is designed to keep them safe on the ice, it can potentially put kids at risk in the car. Shoulder and chest pads, padded pants and other hockey gear, will significantly impact the harness or seatbelt fit, reducing its effectiveness.

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 can significantly reduce the chances of injury.

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

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.



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.

There are penalties under Ontario's Highway Traffic Act for improper use of seatbelts, and for failing to ensure that children are properly secured. Worst yet, failing to ensure proper fit, may result in the child being ejected in the case of a collision.

Although you may have an unbearably early ice time and 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](#)