

	<b>GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES</b> <b>CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL</b>			
	<b>Chapter:</b>	(10) Foster Care	<b>Effective Date:</b>	August 2014
	<b>Policy Title:</b>	Child Safety Equipment		
	<b>Policy Number:</b>	10.15	<b>Previous Policy #:</b>	1011.13, 1011.14

## CODES/REFERENCES

O.C.G.A. § 40-8-76

O.C.G.A. § 40-6-296 (e)(1)

## REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall require all children in care less than eight years of age to be properly restrained in an appropriate child safety passenger seat or booster seat when being transported in a motor vehicle in accordance with state statutes.

**Exception:** The County Director/designee for the county of legal responsibility may waive this requirement upon receiving written verification from the child's primary health provider (physician) that the child has a medical condition that prevents the use of a child safety seat **or** that the child is greater than 4'9" (57 inches) in height.

DFCS shall require all children, regardless of age, to be individually secured by either an appropriately fitting seat belt or safety restraint system when being transported in a motorized vehicle.

DFCS shall require all children in care under 16 years old to wear safety helmets when operating a bicycle or riding as a passenger on a bicycle on any road, bike path or sidewalk and when riding a skateboard. The helmet must be properly fitted and securely fastened.

## PROCEDURES

**The Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) will:**

1. Provide foster parents with instructions for the purchase and reimbursement of a safety-approved car seat for any child placed in their home who falls within the age range; (See [COSTAR manual](#))
  - a. Instruct foster parents to install the child restraint device in accordance with the manufacturer's directions.
  - b. Explain to the foster parent that the restraint device belongs to the child and "moves" with the child.
2. Take the following action when the child reaches the age of eight years old or no longer can use the restraint device:
  - a. Inventory the device and, if needed, make it available for another child in care.
  - b. Provide the foster parent with instructions for the purchase and reimbursement of a car seat or restraint system appropriate for the child's size (if the existing device has been outgrown and the child is either too young or too small to be safely secured with a passenger seat belt).

3. Upon receiving written verification from the child's primary health provider (physician) that the child has a medical condition that prevents the use of a child safety seat, or that the child is greater than 4'9" (57 inches) in height, request the County Director/Designee to grant a waiver.
4. Reimburse foster parents for the purchase of safety helmets in accordance with approved amount (See [COSTAR manual](#)).
  - a. Verify the purchase.
  - b. Obtain a receipt for the purchase.
  - c. Utilize state funds.

#### **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Seatbelts are made for adults and do not fit young children correctly. Booster seats position the shoulder belt across the shoulder and chest rather than the neck. Booster seats also keep the lap belt low over the hip and thigh bones and not across the belly. O.C.G.A. § 40-8-76 requires all children under the age of eight are required to be properly restrained in an appropriate child passenger safety seat or booster seat. This law applies to DFCS staff, foster parents, volunteers transporting children, and anyone transporting children. When being transported, all children must be protected by either a seat belt or safety restraint system.

#### **FORMS AND TOOLS**

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