



## Child Restraint & Vehicle Placement Observation Protocol

1. The purpose of this sheet is to observe booster seat use / child restraint system (CRS) for kids who appear to be ages 4-10 who appear too small for a belt. It is important to **ONLY** collect data on kids needing CRS/boosters.
2. After obtaining site permissions, the lead researcher designates an appropriate and safe area for the research assistant to stand at each observation site (where it is easiest to view inside stopped cars). Always wear an orange vest for safety, and to minimize inquiries by passersby. Observations should take place for 1 hour, at predetermined times.
3. If questioned by drivers while observing, state that you are “just counting cars and safety restraint use.” Be polite and courteous. Do not lie, but also do not describe the entire purpose of the study in your response (if you can avoid it). If necessary, state that identifying information (such as license plates) is **NOT** being recorded. If questioned further, feel free to elaborate.
4. During times you are observing on your own, use your best judgment and do not put yourself in danger. Leave **IMMEDIATELY** if you become uncomfortable (e.g., someone is staring at you or making inappropriate comments, etc.). Delay or reschedule observations in the event of inclement weather.
5. Before you begin, complete the top section of the data sheet (e.g., Primary Observer, Secondary Observer, Date, Day of Week, Location, etc.). Once at your designated area, wait for cars to enter your line of sight, then record observations for all children appearing ages 4-10 who appear too small for a belt. For data accuracy, concentrate mostly on cars that come to a stop (or slow down) at a traffic light or parking area.
6. Start a new line for each child. Record from left to right on the data sheet. Write observation number (#1, 2, 3, etc.) in column one. Record data for each child who appears to be within the target range for age and size category [booster size; approximately 4-10 years old; under 4’9” (57 in) tall]. Base your judgment on child size, age, and appearance, **NOT** on the type of restraint used.
7. For cars where children are **CLEARLY** seen in the vehicle, but visibility is limited (e.g., tinted windows, another car or traffic sign is in the way) and you are unable to determine seat use, please check the **View Obstructed column** on your data sheet once for each child in the car that you are unable to fully see.
8. Please indicate if the child is in a **child restraint system (CRS) or booster** by marking **Yes (Y)**, **No (N)**, or **Inappropriate (I)** on the data sheet. Mark as inappropriate if a lap belt only is being used with a booster. Mark as inappropriate if a child is sitting in a noticeably incorrect CRS/booster for their size.
9. For each child observed to be within the target range, determine if the child is in the **backseat (B)** or **front seat (F)** and record the results in the **Seat Placement Column**.
10. If there are multiple children in the target range in the observed vehicle, complete steps 6-9 before moving on to the next child.

### Additional Information: Data Collection Tips and Decision Points

- If a child appears old/big enough to be in belt, assume true. If borderline, give benefit of doubt.
- If improper use (e.g., lap belt only, belt behind back or under arm), mark “Inappropriate (I)” under the CRS/booster column.
- If a child is in a booster seat, but no belt is being used to restrain the child, consider that unrestrained.
- If view is obstructed, don’t mark anything else. (Not even backseat, even if you can tell.) Draw a line through the whole row, skip it, and move on.
- Sports cars and trucks may not have a back seat, but still mark “F” for front seat if that is where a child is sitting.

Data Collector Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_



If Double Data Collectors, Primary Observer:	Secondary Observer:
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Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Day of Week: S / M / T / W / R / F / S Time in \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ **am/pm** Time out \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ **am/pm**  
 MM DD YY

Note: Only collect data on children appearing to be between the ages of 4-10 and who appear to be too small for a seat belt.

Observation #	Is View Obstructed?	CRS / Booster with Belt? (I=Yes but Inappropriate)			Back or Front Seat?		Comments
		Y	N	I	B	F	
#	Check	Y	N	I	B	F	Comments
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	
		Y	N	I	B	F	

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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