



## If Your Child Keeps Trying to Undo Their Seatbelt

Some children go through a phase of constantly slipping out of the child seat harness or seat belt, or releasing the buckle, during journeys. This is extremely worrying for parents and very frustrating - once a child has learnt how to do this, it is very difficult to stop them. The good news is that it usually seems to be a phase which they grow out of.

Although it is possible to buy 'anti-tampering' devices to stop children undoing their seat belts, RoSPA does not recommend any device, which affects the working either of a seat belt, or of the fastening mechanism. It may reduce the effectiveness of the seat belt in an accident (causing more injuries to the child), and could also be difficult to undo in an emergency.

The following points may help to stop your child undoing their seat belt:

- Ensure the child knows WHY they are required to wear a seat belt, i.e. it keeps them safe from harm
- Depending on the age of the child, make 'doing up the belt' into a chant or song
- Show the child that you have to wear a seat belt also - perhaps you can both sing or chant as you are doing up your own belt too
- Do not start the engine until you are sure that the child is wearing a seat belt correctly AND that your belt is correctly fastened (perhaps this could form part of a game also - ask the child if everyone in the car is belted up and whether it's OK to drive off)
- If possible (e.g. on a leisure trip, or a trip to friends), tell the child that you cannot take them if their belt is not done up - as you don't want any harm to come to them
- If the child undoes the belt during the journey, pull over as soon as it is safe to do so and repeat that the belt must be done up to save them from being hurt
- If the child repeatedly unfastens the seat belt because they are restless and bored, distract them by 'I-Spy' games through the windows, songs, which they are able to join in with, toys and games that they are able to play with in the car. Please remember though that it is most important for the driver NOT to be distracted by these activities

The most important thing to remember is to be **CONSISTENT**.

ALWAYS insist that your child is wearing a seat belt or is strapped into a child seat. DO NOT give in by letting the child travel without being safely fastened - not only are you legally required to do this (you can be prosecuted if you do not), but you will be placing your child at risk of serious injury or death if your vehicle is involved in an accident. It will also be more difficult to insist that the child wears their seatbelt next time they are in the car.



# Child Car Seats



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