Appendix Table 14. Definitions of Types of Occupant Restraints

Belt-positioning booster seat (BPB): A platform that raises the child (provides a taller sitting height) so adult lap and shoulder belts fit better; some have high backs as well. Never use with only a lap belt across the child.

Belt-shortening clip or heavy-duty locking clip: A heavy-duty locking clip intended for use to shorten lap belts that have emergency locking retractors for use with a child restraint. Not to be confused with standard locking clips, heavy-duty locking clips can only be obtained through a vehicle manufacturer.

Booster seats: Are intended to be used as a transition to lap and shoulder belts by older children who have outgrown convertible seats (weight ≤ 40 lb). They are available with high backs, for use in vehicles with low seat backs or no head restraints, and without backs, booster bases only.

Car seat: Common term for a specially designed device that secures a child in a motor vehicle, meets federal safety standards, and increases child safety in a crash.

Child safety seat or child restraint (CSS): A crash-tested device that is specially designed to provide crash protection for an infant or a child. A general term for all sorts of devices, including those that are vests or car beds rather than seats.

Convertable child safety seats or restraints: A child restraint that can be used in more than 1 mode; usually rear-facing for infants and forward-facing for toddlers.

Forward-facing child restraint: A restraint that is intended for use only in the forward-facing position for a child at least age 1 year and at least 20 lb but up to 40 lb.

Infant-only restraint: A restraint designed only for use for a baby (usually weighing ≤ 22 lb) in a semi-reclined, rear-facing position.

Integral or integrated child seat: A child-sized, forward-facing restraint or belt-positioning booster built into a vehicle seat. Some have a full harness and hold children more than 20 lb; others are belt-positioning boosters for use with the adult lap and shoulder belts.

Lap belt: A safety belt anchored at 2 points for use across the occupant’s thighs or hips.

Lap/shoulder belt: A safety belt that is anchored at 3 points and restrains the occupant at the hips and across the shoulder; also called a combination belt.

Rear-facing infant seat: Type of child restraint system that is specifically meant for use by children from birth up to approximately 20 lb and should be used in the rear-facing mode only.

Seat belt-positioning device: Products marketed and sold to adjust the vehicle seat belt to fit a child. There are no federal safety standards for these products. The NHTSA recommends the use of child safety seats and booster seats instead of these products.

 Definitions are from reference 51. NHTSA = National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.