



CARES: AIRPLANE CHILD HARNESS

The kids, car seats and airplane combo is an ongoing topic of conversation when it comes to families and air travel. Last week I wrote a post about [the dangers of airplane lap children](#). There is no doubt a child restraint system (CRS) is the safest option for babies and children when traveling by air.

As the mother of two children close in age, I understand the hassle of lugging a car seat through airports. The last time my family (husband, two children and two teenage step-sons) flew together we looked like the circus passing through town with two car seats, a stroller and load of carry-on bags. When I heard there was an FAA approved airplane child harness called CARES my first thought was, it's about time!

CARES stands for Child Aviation Restraint System and you bet I wanted to check it out for myself. Kindly, CARES sent me one so I could understand the contraption first-hand. My initial comment is, **brilliant!**



When I first pulled the harness out of its travel pouch and held it up I was astonished how strong and sturdy the harness feels – it's made from the same material as an airplane seat belt (it's engineered and manufactured by airline seat belt maker – AmSafe Aviation). Honestly, I thought it would be tricky to use, but I was wrong. Directions are sewn into the harness and are extremely simple (see photo above for a visual):

1. Lower tray table behind child's seat and slide the red harness over the seat.
2. Pull red loop snug about seat back.
3. Tighten red loop 1" above child's shoulders.
4. Insert lap belt through small black loops, buckle lap belt, fasten chest clip.
5. Tighten lap belt and torso harness. Re-stow tray table.

CARES is not only easy to use, but it weighs only one pound and is extremely easy to stash in a carry-on bag pocket. Most importantly it keeps your child safe. The little one must weigh between 22 and 44 lbs to use CARES and the cost is about \$75. If you travel frequently with your tot or if you're looking for a gift for a traveling family, I absolutely recommend CARES. If the cost is a little steep for your pocketbook, considering sharing the cost with another mom and takes turns with it if you have varying air travel plans. *Don't let a the cost of anything stop you from keeping your child safe.*

Wondering what to do about the car seat? You can check it at the airplane check-in counter or consider renting one at your destination (just make sure you do your research before choosing this option).

My girlfriend Paula down in Arizona is married to a pilot which means she travels frequently. She uses CARES for her son every time they fly – believe it or not she saw it in the Skymall catalog and ordered it. Now she's a walking advertisement. When she uses it, even the flight attendants feel inspired to purchase one for the kids in their lives.

Parents, don't feel you have to keep your baby or toddler strapped into a CRS the entire flight. However, *I do urge parents to use a CRS or CARES Child Aviation Restraint System during critical flight moments, namely taxiing, take-off, landing and during turbulence.* These are the most likely times for aircraft accidents and injuries. Please take responsibility and keep you children as safe as you can – after all, that's our job as parents.