

# The Washington Post



## Dr. Gridlock

Your transportation guide around the Beltway and beyond

### Feds recommend child seats on planes

*By Michael D. Bolden*

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood urged people flying with children for the Thanksgiving holiday to secure the children in safety seats.

The news was posted to LaHood's [Fast Lane blog](#) Monday morning as a recommendation from the Federal Aviation Administration.

"Aboard the plane, the safest place for your child is in a child safety seat or device based on your child's weight--not in your lap," the post said.

The blog said that many child seats are approved for use in both cars and on planes, which means you can use the same one for your travels. According to the FAA, it does not mandate the use of child restraint systems "on commercial airplanes because a mandate would require parents to purchase an extra airline ticket for their child, forcing some families who can't afford the extra ticket to drive, a statistically more dangerous way to travel."

The FAA said parents should ask the airline if they offer a half-price fare for children.

"Airlines currently allow children under the age of two to fly free of charge as 'lap children,' not the safest way for a child to travel," the FAA said.

The FAA said it has also approved a **harness restraint** for use on aircraft for children weighing between 22 and 44 pounds.

In August the National Transportation Safety Board recommended that flight rules be changed to require child safety seats on planes for children less than 2 years old.

The NTSB made the recommendation as part of its investigation into the March 2009 crash of a small plane that was making an emergency landing in Butte, Mont. A pilot and 13 passengers were killed, including seven children, ages 1 through 9, the agency said.

The NTSB said it was unable to determine who was sitting where, but the bodies of four children, ages 3 to 9, were found farthest from the crash site, "indicating that these children were likely thrown from the airplane because they were unrestrained or improperly restrained."

The NTSB noted, however, that the crash "was not survivable" and the investigation is continuing. But "if the accident had been less severe and ... survivable," being unrestrained would have provided a "greater risk of injury or death."

**Resources:** [FAA child safety on airplanes website](#)