



SMALL PASSENGERS, BIG RISK? STUDY SHOWS: THREE QUARTERS OF TODDLERS ARE TRAVELLING IN THE CAR UNSAFELY

Bayreuth, June 19, 2025. Safety is deceptive. In Germany, 73% of toddlers ride forward-facing before the age of two¹, despite a significant safety risk. The figure for children under one year old - almost 25% - is even more worrisome. As the summer travel season approaches, bringing millions of German vacationers on the road, experts are raising concerns.

According to the German Federal Statistical Office, 52% of families with children between the age of one and four travel by car on vacation - just under a million children. According to a study conducted by YouGov on behalf of CYBEX, 73% of parents put their child's car seat forward-facing before the child is two years old. This increases the risk of injury to the child by up to 50% in the event of an accident. Accident researchers, doctors, and other experts in the field of child safety recommend that small children up to the age of four should ride in an age-appropriate rear-facing car seat. The exception would be a car seat with integrated full-body airbag, which is comparable to a rear-facing car seat in terms of protection in the event of an accident.

According to the Bavarian State Road Safety Association, "Technical requirements and safety criteria in the EU are regulated by the European car seat safety standard. For new car seats, under UN R129 or the i-Size standard, children up to 15 months, regardless of their size, may not ride forward-facing in these car seats. The State Road Safety Association recommends that small children should ride rear-facing whenever possible. Switching to a forward-facing car seat too early increases the risk of serious injuries to the neck region in the event of an accident. Instead, a forward-facing car seat with comparable safety features should be chosen."

While 23% of all children ride forward-facing before the age of one, this figure is 49% for children under two years old and 25% for those under three years old.

Forward-facing: only with an airbag

The study participants indicated that they changed their children to forward-facing car seats earlier than recommended due to the following reasons:

- Eye contact during the trip (58%)
- To ensure more legroom (43%)
- To prevent children from throwing tantrums (25%)
- To minimize motion sickness (20%)
- Lack of space in the car (13%)



In the event of an accident at only 30 km/h, a conventional forward-facing car seat with a 5-point harness system without a full-body airbag and impact shield can result in serious injuries to the head, neck and spine.

“If you want your child to ride forward-facing, you absolutely should choose a model with a full-body airbag,” says Franz Peleska, Vice President for Product Management Child Safety Global at CYBEX. “In the event of a front collision, this type of car seat provides up to 50% more safety than conventional forward-facing models with a 5-point harness system.²”

ABOUT THE STUDY

Study results are based on online interviews. On behalf of CYBEX, YouGov surveyed parents living in Germany who were 18 years old and older with children aged 0 to under 4, who have a car in their household. The focus of the survey was on the safety of small children.

That is, parents were asked about their two youngest children under the age of 4. Sample size is n=1,009. The survey was conducted from April 2-9, 2025.

ABOUT CYBEX

Founded by Martin Pos in 2005, CYBEX develops a diverse range of products, including car seats, strollers, interiors, baby carriers, and accessories, aimed at providing modern families with safer and more comfortable solutions for their lifestyle. All products created by the German company fully adhere to the CYBEX D.S.F. Innovation Principle, representing a unique combination of distinctive design, highest standards, and smart functionality—fundamentals for everyday life “for all tomorrow’s people.”

¹This statistic is based on the subset of respondents who use a car seat that can be used both rear-facing and forward-facing and who have at least one child who rides forward-facing.

²Results of internal tests using criteria of the 2024 ADAC frontal crash test.