



## HSCSN Medical Necessity Criteria & Authorization Requirements

### Adaptive Car Seats

Version 5/5/2025

Approved 5/6/2025

#### Background:

An adaptive car seat is a specialized piece of equipment designed to safely transport individuals with disabilities or medical conditions that require specific positioning and support. To determine medical necessity for an adaptive car seat, HSCSN considers the following:

#### Medical Conditions:

- **Neurological Disorders:** Cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, etc.
- **Musculoskeletal Disorders:** Severe joint contractures, muscle weakness, or poor muscle tone.
- **Respiratory Conditions:** Severe respiratory compromise requiring specific positioning to maintain airway clearance.
- **Seizure Disorders:** Severe seizure activity that requires specific positioning to prevent injury.
- **Developmental Delays or Disabilities:** Significant developmental delays affecting motor skills and postural control.

#### Functional Limitations:

- **Inability to Maintain Upright Posture:** Significant difficulty sitting independently or maintaining head and trunk control.
- **Limited Head and Neck Control:** Difficulty maintaining head in a neutral position or preventing head slump.
- **Poor Trunk Control:** Inability to sit upright without significant postural support.
- **Limited Range of Motion:** Joint contractures or muscle weakness that restrict movement and positioning.
- **Spasticity or Hypertonicity:** Increased muscle tone that can interfere with positioning and comfort.

#### Safety Concerns:

- **Behavioral concerns:** Releasing the buckle or harness, disturbing the driver, attempting to elope from the vehicle
- **Impaired safety awareness, judgment or communication:** Unaware of unsafe behaviors in vehicle. Unable to follow directions or communicate needs.
- **Risk of Injury:** Increased risk of injury during vehicle accidents due to poor positioning or inadequate restraint systems.
- **Difficulty with Standard Car Seats:** Inability to fit properly or safely in standard car seats.
- **Airway Compromise:** Risk of airway obstruction due to poor positioning or head and neck control.

#### Documentation Requirements:

To establish medical necessity, a comprehensive evaluation by a qualified healthcare professional is typically required. This evaluation should include:

- Detailed medical history and diagnosis
- Assessment of functional limitations and specific positioning needs
- Documentation of attempts to modify standard car seats and their limitations
- Specific recommendations for the type of adaptive car seat required
- Explanation of how the adaptive car seat will improve the individual's safety and quality of life

#### **Additional Considerations:**

- **Federal and State-Specific Regulations:** Some states have specific guidelines and regulations regarding the coverage of adaptive car seats.
- **Manufacturer's Recommendations:** It's important to follow the manufacturer's recommendations for the appropriate use and maintenance of the adaptive car seat.

EPSDT emphasizes providing all medically necessary services to children under 21 enrolled in Medicaid. This includes durable medical equipment that ameliorates the effects of a medical condition or disability.

### **I. Specific Requirements for Requesting an Authorization of an Adaptive Car Seat**

- An authorization request for an adaptive car seat or restraint system must include the following:
  - Signed referral/order from a licensed physician/nurse practitioner for an adaptive car seat.
  - The physician order must be within 6 months of the request and include documentation of a face-to-face visit within the past 6 months.
  - Evaluation by a licensed PT or OT recommending an adaptive car seat.
  - An Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) or certified Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) is part of the evaluation process and involved in making recommendations regarding a specific product.
  - Coded quote from the Durable Medical Equipment (DME) provider.
  - Detailed written order
- If a referral/order from an adaptive car seat is sent to HSCSN by a physician/nurse practitioner, HSCSN will refer the enrollee to the Children's National Rehabilitation & Specialized Care (RSC) Assistive Technology Clinic for evaluation.
- Documentation submitted needs to include the following:
  - Detailed evaluation of the enrollee including disability, motor impairments, communication impairments, cognitive impairments and any behavioral concerns.
  - Explanation of why a standard car seat cannot meet the needs of the enrollee.
  - Rationale for an adaptive car seat and the specific equipment that was recommended.
- Authorization request for specific equipment must come from an in-network DME provider.
- HSCSN does not cover vehicle modifications. The recommended product must be removable and transferrable to other vehicles.

### **II. Medical Necessity Criteria for Adaptive Car Seats**

- **Age:** The enrollee must be under 21 years of age.
- **Diagnosis:** The enrollee must have a diagnosis established by a qualified healthcare professional which causes disability and the need for an adaptive car seat.
- **Referral:** The enrollee must be referred for an adaptive car seat by a treating physician/nurse practitioner.
  - A referral is valid for one year.

- The referral and/or letter of medical necessity must include the diagnosis most relevant to the need for an adaptive car seat.
- **Evaluation by Therapist and Rehab Professional:** The enrollee must be evaluated by a licensed physical or occupational therapist who recommends an adaptive car seat. The enrollee must also be evaluated by an Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) and/or certified Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) to aid in making specific recommendations regarding an adaptive car seat or restraint system.
- **Rationale for the recommendation and equipment recommended:** A written statement must be submitted that provides a detailed assessment of the enrollee, level of function, reasons why a standard car seat cannot meet the enrollee's needs, and a rationale for the specific equipment requested.

### III. Reference Information

- HSCSN Policy UM\_10 Medical Necessity Criteria Development, Evaluation, and Approval
- EPSDT – A Guide for States: Coverage in the Medicaid Benefit for Children and Adolescents, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid, June 2014.
- CASSIP Contract Section
- Articles:
  - O'Neil, J., & Hoffman, B. (2019). Transporting Children With Special Health Care Needs. *Pediatrics*, 143(5), e20190724-e20190724.
  - Downie, A., Chamberlain, A., Kuzminski, R., Vaz, S., Cuomo, B., & Falkmer, T. (2020). Road vehicle transportation of children with physical and behavioral disabilities: A literature review. *Scandinavian journal of occupational therapy*.
  - Dykes, M., & Stears, B. (2023). *Car Seats for Children With Special Needs: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Pediatric Physical Therapists* (Doctoral dissertation, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University).
  - Schneider, L. W., Hobson, D. A., & Bertocci, G. E. (1999). *A rationale and guideline to recommended practice SAE J2249: wheelchair tiedowns and occupant restraint systems for use in motor vehicles* (No. 8). Technical report.

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Một người đại diện sẽ hỗ trợ quý vị.'

**AMHARIC**

እንግሊዘኛ መናገር/ወይም ማንበብ ካልቻሉ፣ እባክዎ በዚህ ስልክ ቁጥር (202) 467-2737.  
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wakiil ayaa ku caawin doona.

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Yog tias koj tsis hais thiab/lossis nyeem tau Lus As Kiv, thov hu rau (202) 467-2737.  
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