

Chair choices

Pick from four types



■ **COMBINATION** These models are made up of a table and chair that combine to form a high chair. Our parent testers thought these were better for children aged two and over. If you're buying online check the design, as we've found some combination chairs are described as convertibles.

■ **CONVERTIBLE** These chairs can be adjusted as your child grows. By removing the tray and adjusting the seat you can use them at a table. The Mutsy Easygrow (7) can be used up to age 12. These models are less suitable for smaller children. If you're looking for a chair to fit your décor, most wooden models are convertibles. Whatever the main material, most convertibles provide little padding, so aren't comfortable for long periods.

■ LIGHTWEIGHT FOLDING

These models are simple in design and, as expected, they're light and fold for storage. They're great if you have little space, and because frames are generally small, they're well suited to younger children. However, these are fairly basic chairs with few features.

■ MULTIFUNCTIONAL

These high chairs are all-singing, all-dancing models with good padding. Most are fitted with a five-point harness – the safest type of restraint – and many allow you to recline the chair or adjust the seat height, making them good for young children. Most models fold for storing, but they're bulky.

High noon

We bring you the best seating options for babies who lunch

By the time your newest arrival is ready to use a high chair – from around seven months – you may be so harassed with feeding time and nappy changes that you're tempted by the first model you see.

But take time to consider all the options – whether you're short on floor space or hoping to preserve the ambience of your dining room, there will be one to suit your needs.

As well as testing 12 high chairs, we've looked at five booster and table seats (see p60), which part-time carers such as other relatives may wish to buy.

Safety is a top concern for parents. A new European Standard on high chairs was released last year and manufacturers have been working to meet the more stringent criteria.

Most developments will be small and hard to spot, although some changes will be more noticeable. The forthcoming new version of the Chicco Polly Double Phase will have castors on two legs of the high chair, rather than four, so it can meet the new criteria.

The Graco high chair is functional, lightweight and easy to store flat



73% Graco
Tea-time £38

This chair may look basic, but we were impressed by how functional it is, as well as being lightweight and easy to store flat. The tray is a little tricky to attach and remove but assembly is quick and easy. The tray and footrest are removable for cleaning and the harness is machine washable. The fabric cleans up well, but the mesh headrest area needs scrubbing. While the chair legs cover a large floor space, they're not bulky. There's also plenty of room to get children in and out of the chair without removing the tray. Our parent testers liked the simple design of this model, which is available online.

WORTH KNOWING This high chair has an adjustable footrest with two positions.

Available Online **Type** Lightweight folding
Removable tray Yes **Restraint** Five-point harness



The way we were

Combination chairs dominated the market 30 years ago in our first test. Today, Mothercare's Pine Cube (4) is the only



such model on test. For sheer number of features even today's luxury chairs struggle to compete with the Baby Relax 7-in-1 of 1977 – while it didn't convert into a table, it could transform into a potty chair, carry chair and swing.

Contacts

Bebecar
020 8201 0505
www.bebecar.co.uk

Brevi
01509 816444
www.babystyle.co.uk

Chicco
01623 750870
www.chicco.co.uk

Cosatto
0870 050 5900
www.cosatto.co.uk

Dorel
020 8236 0707
www.dorel.co.uk

Fisher-Price
01628 500303
www.fisher-price.co.uk

Graco
0844 412 1212
www.graco.co.uk

Jané
028 9084 9045
www.johnstonprams.co.uk

Mamas & Papas
0870 830 7700
www.mamasandpapas.com

Mothercare
0845 330 4030
www.mothercare.com

Mutsy
01509 816444
www.babystyle.co.uk

How we test

Tour de force

We put a 15kg test dummy in each foldable chair and test locking mechanisms by applying force at the points where they are most likely to fold. We also use force to check rearward and sideways stability. The strength of harnesses

and the potential for finger traps are also scrutinised by our lab testers.

Wipe away

With cloths and brushes, our experts wipe and scrub creamy porridge and puréed stew from structures,



67% Fisher-Price BabyGear Healthy Care £70

Our parents' panel were impressed with how practical and easy to use this chair is. The seat has three recline and seven height positions that are easy to adjust with one hand. The various

buttons are red, making them easy to spot. The chair has a crotch pillar to avoid slips, and the tray can be adjusted to avoid spills. It's light compared with the other multifunctionals. Assembly instructions are easy to follow but you'll need your own screwdriver and it takes a while to build. This high chair is available from Argos and Woolworths.

WE LIKE The dishwasher-proof top tray with sections for cups and dishes.

Cheapest stores Argos and Woolworths
Type Multifunctional **Removable tray** Yes
Restraint Five-point harness



66% Brevi Pony £39

This high chair is simple, practical and light. The seat is lightly padded and the smooth upholstery is easy to clean. The lap strap is less easy to clean and fiddly to undo. The tray is adjustable, but to remove it you need to undo the crotch strap first. It doesn't have a five-point harness – the safest type – but it's possible to attach one. In use, this model takes up less floor space than the other foldable models on test. Its compact size and tray position are well suited to young children, but the fixed footrest may be too high for three-year-olds. This Brevi is available online.

WORTH KNOWING This model is sometimes referred to as the Brevi Junior.

Available Online **Type** Lightweight folding **Removable tray** Yes **Restraint** Two-point lap strap and crotch strap

WHICH?
BEST
BUY



65% Mothercare Pine Cube £45

Parents liked the versatility of this high chair, especially for children aged two years and over, as it converts into a table and chair. The lack of upholstery makes it the easiest model tested to clean. The tray is not easy to remove, but it's simple to lift children out of the seat with the tray in position. It's a little time consuming to construct but the instructions are clear. There is a bar and crotch strap restraint – we would advise buying a five-point harness. The model can't be folded, but our toddler testers loved using it as a chair and table so you're unlikely to put it away. It also takes up less space than you might expect. It's available from Mothercare.

WE FOUND The tray can be put in two positions.

Cheapest store Mothercare **Type** Combination **Removable tray** Yes **Restraint** Bar and crotch strap

WHICH?
BEST
BUY

Worth tracking down

67% Mamas & Papas Café Junior

This lightweight folding chair is no longer produced, but it scored highly in testing and is still available. It folds flat and is easy to carry. The tray has a deep lip and is adjustable and removable – with effort. The covers are tricky to take off but fairly easy to clean while on the high chair. It has a three-point harness and clip-on shoulder straps.



coverings and crevices to find the easiest-to-clean high chairs.

Spanner at the ready

Testers pore over instructions to see how long it takes to assemble each chair. Many take a few minutes but the most time-consuming model

takes more than an hour – be thankful you have to assemble it only once.

Pester power

Our parents' panel give us their views on features and form – the children are keen to voice and gurgles their opinions too.



What you should look for

REMOVABLE COVERS AND STRAPS

Look for removable, washable covers and straps for easy cleaning

D-RINGS

D-shaped rings allow an additional harness to be attached to a high chair

FIVE-POINT HARNESS

These are the safest harnesses, with waist, shoulder and crotch straps. Most three-point harnesses don't have shoulder straps. If a high chair has lap straps only, the chair should have a crotch pillar. All the chairs we tested can be fitted with a five-point harness

REMOVABLE AND ADJUSTABLE TRAY

A removable tray is handy for cleaning and adjusting it can make lifting a child easier and food less likely to spill on laps

DUAL TRAYS

The bottom tray fits on to the high chair, while the second fits on top and is easily removed for cleaning. Some top trays are dishwasher safe and some have moulded ridges

Facts & scores

Our experts spent hours poking and prodding to find the best high chairs

Stubborn stains

We were really impressed with the functionality of the Chicco, but the two layers of upholstery and all the nooks and crannies meant it became a real demon to clean.

Quickly does it

This Cosatto On the Move packs flat in one swift action and comes with its own carry bag.

Boost your buy

You'd be wise to buy a harness with the Mutsy and a Mutsy Seat Increaser for children under 12 months, as they're not included.

MODEL

- 1 **GRACO** Tea-time
- 2 **FISHER-PRICE** BabyGear Healthy Care
- 3 **BREVI** Pony
- 4 **MOTHERCARE** Pine Cube
- 5 **CHICCO** Polly Double Phase
- 6 **COSATTO** On the Move
- 7 **MUTSY** Easygrow
- 8 **BREVI** Jupiter
- 9 **COSATTO** Aurora Plus
- 10 **MOTHERCARE** Atlanta
- 11 **BEBECAR** Multiform

USING THE TABLE

We have tested the latest high chairs that are available from the main manufacturers. The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys, we give the cheapest widely available high-street price. Prices for other

Booster and table seats

If you fancy something smaller, we've also tested portable seats

We looked at both table and booster seats, which relatives or childminders may wish to buy – they're cheaper and can be stored away easily. However, we were less keen on table seats in general because you have to be confident your table is strong enough and won't tip, which can be hard to judge. The table seats we tested are suitable for children up to 15kg only – between two and three years old. Also, because they're mainly made of fabric, these models are not so easy to clean.



FISHER-PRICE BABYGear HEALTHY CARE BOOSTER SEAT £30

This booster seat looks small but it is big enough for a three-year-old. It has three height and tray adjustments and a dual tray with a cover, so if you're travelling you can put the cover over the tray and clean up when you get home. This model has a three-point harness.



DOREL SAFETY 1ST FOLD & GO BOOSTER SEAT £25

The retractable harness straps and storage compartment with this booster seat make for a tidy package. This seat is compact but is still big enough for a child aged up to three years old. Be careful taking the tray on and off – it's easy to break the tray clips if you remove it incorrectly.



MOTHERCARE DELUXE FOLDING BOOSTER SEAT £25

For the utmost security, this model comes with a five-point harness. When folded, the Mothercare is the largest of the three booster seats we've tested, but the handhold in the backrest makes it easy to carry. A three-year-old child can fit into this seat, although it does look a little tight.

SPECIFICATION							WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE						SCORE %
PRICE (£)	TYPE OF CHAIR	TRAY POSITIONS	DUAL TRAY	RECLINE	HEIGHT ADJUSTABLE	REMOVABLE COVERS	FEATURES	ASSEMBLY	EASE OF CLEANING	STORAGE	PORTABILITY	EASE OF USE	
38	lightweight	3					★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	73
70	multifunctional	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★★	67
39	lightweight	3					★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	66
45	combination	2					★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	65
100	multifunctional	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	63
50	lightweight	1				✓	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	62
108	convertible	1					★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★★	62
85	multifunctional	2	✓	✓	✓		★★★★★	★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	59
80	multifunctional	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	57
35	lightweight	1	✓				★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	55
110	convertible	1					★	★★	★★★★	★	★★	★★★	48

models are a guide only. Online prices are in *italics*. **Type of chair** The design of the chair, as outlined on p58. **Tray positions** The number of positions available to move the tray closer to, or further from, the child. **Dual tray** Whether there are two trays attached. **Recline** Whether the seat can be tilted back. **Height adjustable**

Whether the seat can be moved down to use it as a low chair.

Removable covers Whether the covers and upholstery can be removed for cleaning.

Test performance

Features Includes removable covers and tray features.

Assembly Rating includes time

taken and the ease of assembly.

Ease of cleaning How easy it is to clean food from the tray, seat, harness, footrest and out of tight corners. **Storage** How easy it is to store and the space it uses.

Portability How easy it is to move around when folded or erect.

Ease of use Includes practicality, the restraint system and how

comfortable the chair is for babies of various sizes.

Score

This ignores price and is based on the following:

Ease of use	55%
Safety	25%
Assembly	10%
Features	10%



MOTHERCARE ADJUSTABLE FIT TABLE SEAT £25

This model clamps on to the table and has a four-point harness with shoulder and waist straps. The child's feet fit through leg holes in the fabric that forms the crotch pillar to prevent him or her slipping forwards. It folds up for transportation, but it's not that easy to clean.



JANÉ OPTIMA PLUS TABLE SEAT £47

This table seat was extremely easy to fit, requiring no tightening of screws. It took less than a minute to assemble but it's no easier to clean than the Mothercare table seat. It has a lap strap restraint only, but the fabric section forms into a crotch pillar for extra safety.

➡ Trouble-free meal times

If every feeding time feels like a monkey's tea party, follow our simple tips to put an end to the antics

■ Introduce new foods one at a time to give your baby a chance to get used to new flavours and textures.

This will also help you identify any allergic reactions.

■ If your baby keeps refusing a particular food, wait and try offering it again in a few days' time – they may never take to it but there is the possibility they will convert over time.

■ For babies who like to Frisbee their food across the kitchen, you can buy bowls with suction rings.

■ If your child refuses certain solid foods, try cutting them into fun shapes to make them more appealing.

