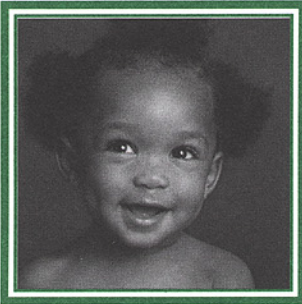


CHILD PASSENGER Safety



Car seat check-ups have shown that more than 90% of children who are placed in child safety seats are improperly restrained — that's 9 out of 10 children!

What about your child?

What are the basic guidelines for child safety seats?

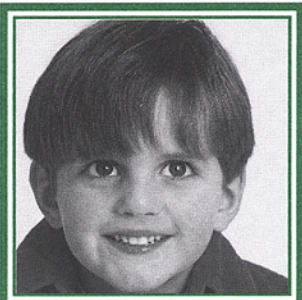
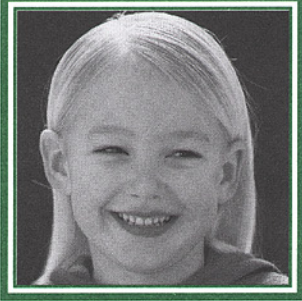
- ★ Infants must be rear-facing until 1 yr. old and at least 20 lbs.
- ★ Children over 20 lbs. and 1 yr. of age may then be forward-facing in a child safety seat with a harness.
- ★ Once the child weighs at least 40 lbs., the child needs to be placed in a booster seat in the back seat until all of the following criteria are met:
 - is able to sit up with knees bent at the edge of the seat
 - is able to sit up without slouching
 - shoulder belt comfortably crosses the chest, not across the neck
 - lap belt fits low and tight across the upper thighs
 - weighs 80 lbs. and is about 4' 10" tall

Does it really matter?

- ★ Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury to children.
- ★ State law requires that children under age 4 be placed in an approved child safety seat.

Statistics tell us why it's important

- ★ In a car crash at just 25 mph, an unrestrained child can slam into a dashboard or windshield at a force equal to a fall from a three-story building.
- ★ More than 70% of all childhood deaths in car crashes could be prevented if children were properly restrained.



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Quick Safety Seat Check



Should my child ride in the back seat?

- ★ Children under 12 years old should always ride in the back seat.
- ★ The back seat is generally the safest place for anyone in the most common type of car crash – head-on collisions.

Why should my infant ride facing the back of the vehicle?



- ★ An infant's neck is not yet strong enough to withstand the forces of a crash when forward-facing. So, infants up to 1 year of age must always ride rear-facing.
- ★ Your infant should ride semi-reclined so that the head does not fall forward. If needed, simply put a tightly rolled bath towel under the foot of the child safety seat to tilt it back a little so your baby's head lies back comfortably.
- ★ Parents should not be overly concerned that the child is out of the driver's view in the back seat. If the baby has special health needs that require full time monitoring, ask another adult to ride with the baby in the back seat.



Is my child's seat tight enough in place?

- ★ Using the instructions that come with your child safety seat as a guide, be sure to place the seat belt through the correct belt pathway of your child safety seat.
- ★ Push the car seat very firmly into the vehicle seat, using as much of your body weight as possible. Next, pull the seat belt as tight as you can. Once buckled, check that the seat is tight enough, moving no more than one inch from side to side at the belt pathway.

Should the harness straps be snug around my child?



- ★ If your child safety seat has more than one set of slots for the harness straps, be sure to use the slots that are at or below your child's shoulder level for rear-facing seats, or the reinforced slots (usually the top slots) for forward-facing seats.
- ★ A child safety seat protects by pulling the straps straight over the child's shoulders and adjusting to a snug fit. Allow no more than one finger underneath the straps at your child's collarbone.



Even on a short trip?

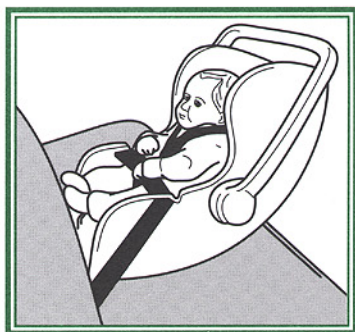
- ★ Never hold a child in your lap, even on a short trip. Even if you are wearing a seat belt yourself, the child is still likely to be torn from your arms or crushed in a collision if not properly restrained.
- ★ The cargo area of a pickup truck, van or station wagon is a very dangerous place to ride. Anyone riding in the bed of a pickup truck, even if it has a camper, is at serious risk of being thrown out and seriously injured or killed.

What about air bags?



- ★ An infant or child can be seriously injured or killed by the force of an inflating air bag
- ★ Rear-facing child safety seats should never be used in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger air bag, and it is recommended that no one under 12 years old ride in the front seat at all.

Tips for Choosing the Best Seat for Your Child



Infant-only Seats

Infant-only seats are designed for use with infants up to 20 lbs. and should always be used rear-facing in the back seat of your vehicle. This is the seat for newborns up to at least 3 months of age. Some infant-only seats have a base that fits in your car, allowing you to remove the seat and use it as a carrier. Many parents like this convenience.

Convertible Seats

Convertible seats are too big for newborns, but may be used rear-facing in the back seat for infants from 3 months to 1 year of age. When your child reaches 1 year old and 20 lbs, the convertible seat may then be used forward-facing in the back seat. When choosing a convertible seat, you may select a 5-point harness style, T-shield style or a tray shield style. A seat with a 5-point harness is best for infants.



Booster Seats

Booster seats are needed for children over 40 lbs. and should be used until they reach about 80 lbs. and 4 ft. 10 in. tall. Booster seats raise the child so the regular vehicle seat belt fits properly. Without the booster, a seat belt can ride dangerously across the stomach or neck and may cause serious injury in a crash. If your vehicle has a low seat, a high-back booster is best for head support to prevent whiplash.

- ★ The best child safety seat is the one that YOU can afford, fits YOUR child, fits in YOUR vehicle and is easy for YOU to use so that you will use it correctly every time your child rides. The simplest and least expensive model will work as well as the one with lots of fancy features.
- ★ Take your time choosing a child safety seat. Shop around – there's lots to choose from. Think long-term. Remember that you will need to buy all 3 types of seats (infant only, convertible and booster) as your child grows up.
- ★ Before you buy a seat, practice changing the harness slots while in the store and try adjusting the length of the straps as well. If you choose an infant-only seat with a handle, carry the seat around in the store before buying to make sure it feels comfortable. If the seat has a removable base, check to see how easy it is to remove.
- ★ Measure for a correct fit, or better yet, place the child safety seat in your car before buying to make sure that it fits well in your vehicle seat. (Cars with small rear seats or bucket seats may present special problems.) Practice buckling the seat tightly into your car before your child's first ride.
- ★ If the seat seems a little too large at first for your newborn, you can provide additional support by rolling up a couple of small blankets and tucking them in on each side of your baby's shoulders and head. If you want to cover your baby for warmth, always remember to buckle the harness around the child first and then put a blanket over the child.

Tips for Keeping Your Child Happy in a Child Safety Seat

Set an example – Show your child that you buckle up in the car every time, just like him or her. Parents who buckle up show their children that it is important to ride safely.

Be consistent – Always buckle your child into the child safety seat or seat belt, regardless of the length of the trip. 70% of all motor vehicle crashes occur within 25 miles of home.

Start early – Children who start out in child safety seats as infants and ride in them every trip are much easier to keep in their child safety seats when they become toddlers & preschoolers, and in seat belts as they get older.

Be firm – If the child manages to get out of the child safety seat, pull to a safe area and stop the car. Talk to the child in a firm, serious voice, then buckle up the child again in the safety seat or seat belt. The child will learn that you will not let him or her ride without being buckled up.

Use words – Explain in simple words why he/she must ride in a child safety seat. End with *“I love you so much I don’t want you to get hurt”* or *“I’m buckling you up because I love you.”*

Be comforting – The biggest reason children try to unbuckle is boredom. Keep them busy and they will be more content. A variety of soft travel books and activities will help fill the time. Singing, telling stories or playing tapes is always entertaining. You can also tape bright, colorful pictures to the back of the vehicle seat. On long trips, stop regularly to change positions, diapers or to feed the child.

For more information on Child Passenger Safety, call 501/320-KIDS or visit our website at www.archildrens.org

Information provided is current as of August 2000. Please be aware that recommendations regarding Child Passenger Safety may be revised over time in response to product changes and research studies.



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