

Proper Child Safety Seat Use Chart

Buckle Everyone! Children Age 12 and Under in Back!

	INFANTS	TODDLER	YOUNG CHILDREN
AGE/ WEIGHT	Birth to at least 1 year of age AND up to 20-35 lbs.	Over 1 year old and Over 20 lbs. up to 40 lbs.	Over 40 lbs. up to 80-100 lbs.
TYPE OF SEAT	Infant only or rear-facing convertible rated to higher rear-facing weight limits	Convertible / Forward-Facing with Harness	Belt positioning booster seat
SEAT POSITION	Rear-facing only Semi-reclined; no more than 45°	Forward-facing	Forward-facing
ALWAYS MAKE SURE:	<p>Children up to at least 1 year and at least 20 lbs. must ride rear-facing to support the weak neck and spine.</p> <p>Harness straps flat and through slots at or below shoulder level.</p> <p>No more than one finger width of space under harness when tested at collar-bone.</p> <p>Babies should not be bundled up in blankets or heavy snowsuits while in safety seat.</p> <p>Harness chest clip placed at armpit level.</p> <p>Seat should be installed tightly into vehicle, with no more than 1 inch movement when tested at the seat belt path.</p>	<p>Move to upright position.</p> <p>Harness straps flat and through slots at or above shoulder level.</p> <p>Most convertible seats require top slots for forward-facing.</p> <p>No more than one finger width of space under harness when tested at collar-bone.</p> <p>Harness chest clip placed at armpit level.</p> <p>Seat should be installed tightly into vehicle, with no more than 1 inch movement when tested at the seat belt path.</p>	<p>Belt positioning boosters must be used with both lap and shoulder belts.</p> <p>Make sure the lap belt fits low and tight across the lap/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits snug across the chest and shoulder to avoid abdominal injuries.</p> <p>Boosters with shields should NOT be used with children over 40 lbs.</p> <p>Seat belt adjusters can cause abdominal injuries to children.</p> <p>NEVER allow children to place shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back.</p>
WARNING	<p>The center of the back seat is generally the safest place to transport children in safety seats.</p> <p>Never place a rear-facing child in the front seat when there are air bags.</p>	<p>The center of the back seat is generally the safest place to transport children in safety seats.</p> <p>All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat.</p>	<p>The center of the back seat is generally the safest place to transport children if lap and shoulder belts are available.</p> <p>All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat.</p>

Frequently Asked Questions...

I can't keep my child in his safety seat. Which car seat is escape-proof?

The purpose of the car seat is to properly restrain the child in the event of a crash. While there is no "escape proof" child seat, the combination of quality car seats with a snug harness, parental oversight and parental firmness keeps children in their seat.

Is it better to buy a car seat with a 5-point harness or one with a shield that pulls down over the child's head?

Both types of seats meet federal safety standards; however a five-point harness system provides better protection. Avoid models with a t-shield or tray shield, especially for newborns. In a crash, the baby's body may hit the hard plastic shield, causing head, abdominal, and chest injuries.

What is the very best car seat to buy?

All of the child safety seats on the market meet the same federal safety standards. The "best" seat is the one that fits your child, fits your vehicle, is comfortable for your child, and is easy to use properly each time you travel.

How do I know if my child safety seat is installed tightly enough?

When the seat is properly installed, you should not be able to move it more than one inch from side to side or front to back. Put your knee in the safety seat and add your adult weight while tightening the seat belt to get a tight fit.

Where is the best location for the car seat?

The center of the back seat is the safest place for a car seat because it is farthest away from crash impact points. If the car seat does not fit in the center-rear, then one of the outboard seating positions should be used.

Why are top tethers important?

A tether can help anchor a forward-facing child restraint more securely and reduce forward movement of the head.

Why do I need to keep my baby rear-facing until 1 year and 20 pounds?

Keep in mind that this is a MINIMUM recommendation, and babies should actually ride rear-facing much longer if possible. Babies have heavy heads and fragile necks, with soft bones and stretchy ligaments, and even a slight forward "whipping" of the head can lead to paralysis or even death. When a baby rides facing backwards, the whole body, head, neck, and torso are cradled by the back of the safety seat.

When can my child ride in the front seat?

It is recommended that children under the age of 13 ride in the back seat. While there are no height/weight requirements, children are much safer seated and properly restrained in the back seat regardless of age or the presence of an air bag. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, putting a child in the back seat instead of the front seat reduces the risk of death by 27 percent.

Do I need to replace my car seat after a crash?

Crash forces can weaken or damage child safety seats, safety belts, and other protective devices, making them less effective. This type of damage can even occur in minor crashes and may not be visible to the naked eye. For this reason, manufacturers state that child safety seats and safety belts involved in crashes must be replaced. If a restraint system has protected a passenger in a crash, it has already done its job.

How can I be sure my child's safety seat is installed correctly?

First always read your child safety seat instructions and your vehicle owner's manual. Then, call 1-800-KID-N-CAR to locate a child safety seat technician near you.

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