

## CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY TIPS

When choosing a safety seat for your child, keep in mind the following important points:

1. The seat must meet federal standards.
2. Use the car seat for every trip. Most crashes happen close to home.
3. Select a seat that is easy for you to use every time.
4. The seat must fit properly in your car. Read your vehicle owner's manual for information about using a child restraint in your vehicle.
5. The seat must be appropriate for the child's weight and height. To determine whether it is, read the safety-seat manufacturer's instructions. Place the safety belt exactly where the instructions recommend it be placed.
6. You can't be sure about the history of a used seat. Best practice is to purchase a new seat.
7. Never use a car seat that has been in a crash. Check for expiration dates and recalls.

### *Air bag warning:*

- Never place a child in a rear-facing safety seat in front of an air bag.
- All children ages 12 and under are safest riding secured in the back seat.

## INFANTS

### Use safety seats designed for children to use rear-facing.

- Infants should ride **rear-facing** to **at least** 20 pounds **and at least** one year of age (Recommendation is to keep infants rear-facing until age 2 or to the height and weight limit of a convertible child restraint.)
- Infants should ride reclined, up to a 45-degree angle
- Harness straps should be threaded through the slots in the back of the seat to place the straps at or below the baby's shoulders. This will help keep the baby restrained in the seat, providing additional protection in a crash.
- Buckle the harness system between the infant's legs.
- Place the retainer clip on the upper part of the infant's chest (approximately at arm pit level).
- Tighten the harness so that the child is snugly secured in the seat. Straps should be tight enough that you cannot pinch any slack in the straps.
- Make sure the car seat is secured in the vehicle. The safety seat should not move more than 1 inch toward the front of the vehicle or side-to-side.



## TODDLERS



### Use safety seats designed for children to use forward-facing.

Children weighing between 20 and 40 pounds **and** over one year of age may ride **forward-facing** in a convertible safety seat or harness system. If a child does not meet both the minimum weight and age, then he/she should continue to ride rear-facing in an appropriate safety seat.

- Thread the harness straps through the slots in the back of the safety seat that will place the straps at or above the child's shoulders.
- Buckle the harness system between the child's legs.
- Tighten the harness so that the child is snugly secured in the seat.
- Secure the safety belt to the safety seat. The safety seat should not move more than 1 inch toward the front of the vehicle or side-to-side.

**Safety advocates recommend using a safety seat equipped with a five-point harness system.**

## **BOOSTER** (40 to 80 pounds)

Children weighing between 40 and up to 80 pounds should be restrained by a belt-positioning booster seat.

Belt-positioning booster seats, which are used in conjunction with the vehicle's lap-and-shoulder safety-belt system, provide good upper-body protection for children weighing more than 40 pounds.



- Booster seats must be used with a lap-shoulder belt.
- A booster seat keeps the vehicle safety belt positioned correctly over the strongest bones -- the shoulders and hips. Without a booster seat, the vehicle safety belt system will likely not adequately fit a child within this weight range.

## **OLDER CHILDREN** (Over 80 pounds)



When children have outgrown safety seats (around 80 pounds and about 4'9" tall), they graduate to safety belts.

- Lap belt should fit low across hips, NEVER across the face, neck or stomach.
- Shoulder belt should fit snug across shoulder, not neck.
- Generally, seat belts do not fit a child correctly until at least 60 pounds.
- Children should ride in a car seat or booster seat until a seat belt fits the child correctly.

### **TIPS FOR TRAVELING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN**

- Never misuse safety seats. Follow the safety-seat manufacturer's directions and the vehicle instructions for buckling the seat into your car or truck.
- The back seat is much safer than the front.
- Begin using a safety seat immediately. Protect your newborn in a safety seat on the way home from the hospital and on every ride.
- Small children (not infants) can be included in the process of selecting a safety seat. Children are happier and more inclined to use a safety seat if they feel comfortable in the seat.
- Remind the child that the vehicle will not move until everyone is buckled up.
- Children are imitators. Set a positive example for your child by buckling up yourself on every trip.
- Don't keep books, bottles or other sharp, hard objects in your car or truck. In a collision such objects can become airborne, possibly striking and injuring you or your child. Provide a special soft toy for children to play with when riding in a motor vehicle.
- Don't let children eat while riding in a car or truck. A sudden stop could cause a child to choke.
- Lock your doors. Teach children not to play with door handles or locks.

Please read your vehicle instructions to make sure that your safety belt will work with your safety seat. In order for a safety belt to work it must remain tight when securing a safety seat.

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