

Make Safe Choices When Buckling Up Children

During Child Passenger Safety Week this year, urge parents and caregivers to make sure that car seats and booster seats are correctly selected for the child's age and size and properly installed in their vehicles. It is also important to increase booster seat/seat belt use among children age 8 through 13 and spread the message that they are safer in the back seat of a vehicle. By educating children and families on the importance of occupant protection, they will make buckling up a habit for life.

- ◆ Select a car seat based on your child's age and size, and choose a seat that fits in your vehicle and use it every time.
- ◆ Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions; read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system; and check height and weight limits.
- ◆ To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- ◆ Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12.

Before Baby Arrives — When you're an expectant mother, it's important to always wear your seat belt to protect you and your unborn child. Wear the lap belt across your hips and below your belly with the shoulder belt across your chest (between the breasts).

Rear-Facing



Under 2 years old?

For the best possible protection, secure children in a rear-facing child safety seat until 2 years of age or until the maximum weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat. Children younger than 2 years should always ride in a rear-facing car seat. All children under age 13 should ride in a back seat.

Children in the second year of life (12-24 months) are over five times less likely to be seriously injured or die in a crash if they are secured rear-facing. Article in Injury Prevention 2007; 13: 398-402 "Car Safety Seats for children: rear-facing for best protection."

Forward-Facing



Over 2 years old?

When children outgrow the rear-facing child safety seat, secure them in a forward-facing child safety seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat. All children under age 13 should ride in a back seat.

Belt-Positioning Booster Seat



Once children outgrow their forward-facing child safety seat, secure them in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle lap and shoulder belt fits properly, typically, when the child is approximately 4 feet 9 inches and between 8 and 12 years of age. All children under age 13 should ride in a back seat.

Seat Belt



When children outgrow their belt-positioning booster seat, secure them in a properly fitted lap and shoulder belt. A lap and shoulder belt fits properly when the lap belt lays low and snug across the hips/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the center of the chest and shoulder. All children under age 13 should ride in a back seat.

The Lap and Shoulder Seat Belt should always be used for optimal protection.

Any Age, Weight or Height, Always Buckle Your Family Right

Follow basic "correct use" principles to provide education and guidance to child restraint users without compromising the child's safety. Parents must become familiar with their safety belt systems, car seat and other vehicle safety features.

1. READ BOTH THE CAR SEAT AND VEHICLE OWNER'S MANUALS BEFORE ATTEMPTING A CAR SEAT INSTALLATION.

- ◆ There is no shortcut to achieving a safe installation.

2. Infants always ride rear-facing in the back seat at no greater than a 45-degree recline.

This enables the infant to maintain an open airway.

3. Infants must ride rear-facing until two years of age or until the maximum weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

4. NEVER place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat of an airbag-equipped vehicle with an active passenger side airbag. A rear-facing car seat may be used in a front seat only if the airbag has an on/off switch and the switch is in the OFF position. To determine if airbags are present in the vehicle, check the:

- ◆ sun visor
- ◆ dashboard
- ◆ owner's manual



5. Older toddlers that have outgrown the rear-facing car seat, secured in a Forward-facing car seat, can ride in front of an airbag only if properly secured and no other seating position is available in a back seat. Always:

- ◆ push the vehicle seat back as far as possible.
- ◆ use the harness according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ◆ use the shoulder belt properly.

6. Children should be secured in a car seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

7. Place the car seat harness through the slots:

- ◆ at or below the shoulders for a rear-facing infant.
- ◆ at or above the shoulders for a forward-facing child.

8. The car seat harness should not allow any slack.

A snug harness:

- ◆ lies in a relatively straight line without sagging.
- ◆ should not, however, be so tight as to press into a child's body.



9. All children who have outgrown their forward-facing car seat should be properly secured in a booster seat until the vehicle lap and shoulder belt fits correctly, at approximately 4'9" and between 8 and 12 years of age.

10. Children age 12 and under should ride properly restrained in a back seat.

11. Place the vehicle seat belt around or through the car seat exactly where the car seat manufacturer directs.

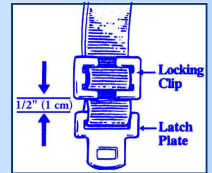
12. Tighten and LOCK the vehicle seat belt according to directions found in the vehicle owner's manual.

- ◆ Check for tightness at the seat belt path.
- ◆ Allow no more than one inch of side-to-side or forward movement of the car seat.

13. Obtain and use any additional equipment necessary to secure the seat belt properly:

- ◆ locking clips
- ◆ auxiliary buckles
- ◆ tethers

Use as directed by the vehicle and / or car seat manufacturer.



14. If using LATCH, attach the LATCH hooks/attachment on the car seat to the lower anchor bars in the vehicle following instructions in the vehicle owner's manual. Route the LATCH attachment webbing through the designated belt path following the car seat manufacturer's instructions. Check for tightness at the belt path.

Attach the tether strap (if applicable) to tether anchor and tighten.

Car seat and vehicle manufacturers provide a maximum weight limit for LATCH system use. Lower anchors and tethers should be discontinued when the weight limit is met.

15. When in doubt, don't guess – read instructions, call for technical assistance:

TIPP 1-800-CAR BELT

www.pakidstravelsafe.org

NHTSA 1-888-dash2dot

www.nhtsa.dot.gov

