

✓ Check Your Child's Car Seat!

Choosing and Using Car Seats Correctly

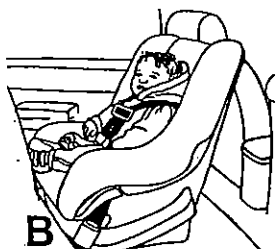
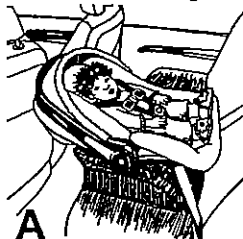
Child
Safety
Facts
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Is your child using the right car seat?

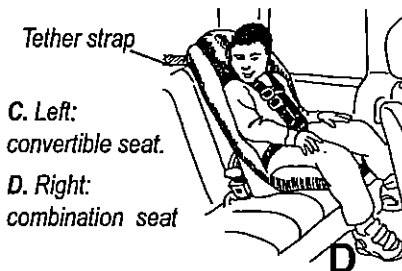
STAGE 1: Rear-facing seat—use from birth to at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds. Facing the rear is the safest way for a baby or toddler to ride.

Under age 1: Small, infant-only car seats (A) always face the rear. Convertible seats (B) face the rear for babies up to 30 to 35 pounds (check label), then can be faced forward (C).

Over age 1: Continue rear facing in a convertible seat until the child is at the seat's rear-facing weight limit (30 to 35 pounds, check label). Make sure the child's head is below the top of the car seat.



STAGE 2: Forward-facing seat with harness (C, D)—for a child over age 1, up to 40 to 65 pounds. May be a convertible seat, combination seat (forward-facing seat/booster), built-in car seat, or vest.



C. Left: convertible seat.
D. Right: combination seat

STAGE 3: Booster seat with lap-shoulder belt (E)—for older children (4 to 8+), from 40 pounds to 80 to 100 pounds. Seat belts do **not** fit children correctly until at least age 8. Use only with a lap and shoulder belt. Never use a booster with a lap-only belt.

In lap-only belt positions, use a car seat for heavier children, or a vest or harness. See a list at www.saferidenews.com.



Is the car seat second-hand?

- Be careful with used car seats. Make sure you have the instructions and any recalls have been fixed. Make sure it has not been in a crash, as there can be hidden damage. Avoid seats older than 6 years.

Does your child ride in back?

- The back seat is much safer than the front. Correctly buckle up children under 13 in the back seat.
- **Air Bag Safety:** Never put an infant in a rear-facing car seat in front with an air bag. The force of the air bag can kill any child sitting or leaning too close to the dashboard. If the truck or car has an air bag on/off switch, **turn it off** when a child rides in the front seat.

Are you following the instructions?

- Always follow instructions for your child's car seat.
- Look in the vehicle owner's manual for important information and tips on installing the seat.

Is the car seat tightly installed?

- Attach car seat with seat belt or LATCH anchors (if both vehicle and child seat have LATCH). Use whichever gives the tightest fit.
- A tight fit means the car seat moves less than 1 inch forward or side to side.
- Put the seat belt in the correct path (check labels). If using lower LATCH attachments, make sure you hook to the correct anchors in the vehicle.
- Use tether strap on a forward-facing car seat (C,D).

Are the harness straps the right height? Are they snug on your child?

- For rear-facing seats, shoulder straps must come out of the slots **at or below** the child's shoulders.
- When facing forward, straps must come out **at or above** the shoulders. For some forward-facing seats, only the top slots can be used (check instructions).
- Make harness straps snug, so you cannot pinch slack in the straps or the child cannot lean forward. Put chest clip at armpit level.

For information about local car seat safety programs: 454-5477

RESOURCES:

NHTSA: www.nhtsa.dot.gov, Auto Safety Hotline, 888-DASH-2-DOT

SafetyBelt Safe U.S.A.: 800-745-7233, www.carseat.org

Find a local car seat inspection station: www.seatcheck.org,

866-SEATCHECK (732-8243)