

Basic Car Seat Safety

Don't put your child at risk—buckle up the right way on every ride!



All children must use a car seat, booster seat or seat belt.

- ☒ My child always rides in a back seat and never in front of an airbag.
- ☐ Everyone in my car buckles up on every ride using the right car seat, booster seat or seat belt for each person's age and size.
- ☐ My child's car seat has all of its parts, labels and instructions and has never been in a crash.
- ☐ I follow the instructions for my car and my car seat so that my child is buckled in right.
- ☐ I never leave my child alone in a car.
- ☐ If I have any car seat questions, I know I can contact Safe Kids USA.

www.safekids.org

Safe Kids USA
202-662-0600
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004

Program Sponsor



Proud Program Supporter



Babies under 2 use rear-facing car seats

- ☒ She always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- ☐ She always rides in a car seat made for her size and age.
- ☐ She sits facing the back of the car in her car seat.
- ☐ The straps are snug on her, and I can't pinch the buckled strap.
- ☐ Her car seat is buckled tightly in the car and doesn't move more than one inch when I pull it.
- ☐ She uses a bigger seat rear-facing until she outgrows the harness. Many harnesses go to 35, 40 or 45 pounds.



Toddlers and big kids use forward-facing car seats

If my child is over age 2 AND has outgrown the weight and height limits for the rear-facing seat:

- ☒ He always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- ☐ He always rides in a car seat made for his size and age.
- ☐ The straps are snug on him, and I can't pinch the buckled strap.
- ☐ His car seat is buckled tightly in the car and doesn't move more than one inch when I pull it. I use the top tethers designed for the seat.
- ☐ He uses this car seat until he outgrows the harness. Many harnesses go to 50, 60 or even 80 pounds.



Older, bigger kids use booster seats

If my child is under 4 feet, 9 inches tall AND has outgrown the weight and height limit of the forward-facing car seat:

- ☒ She always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- ☐ She always rides on a booster seat using a seat belt with lap and shoulder straps.
- ☐ The lap belt sits low on her hips, not her stomach.
- ☐ The shoulder belt is on her shoulder – not on her neck, under her arm or behind her back.
- ☐ The seat belt is snug, flat and comfortable on her.
- ☐ She may be between 8-12 years of age before the seat belt fits.



Kids ready for seat belts

If my child is over 4 feet, 9 inches tall and has outgrown the booster seat:

- ☒ She always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- ☐ She always uses a seat belt with lap and shoulder straps.
- ☐ The lap belt sits low on her hips, not her stomach.
- ☐ The shoulder belt is on her shoulder – not on her neck, under her arm or behind her back.
- ☐ Her back is firmly against the seat back, her knees bend at the front edge of the seat, and she can sit this way for the whole ride.
- ☐ The seat belt is snug, flat and comfortable on her. If the seat belt does not fit right, she must use a booster seat.

