

Car Seat Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death to children. According to Safe Kids USA, an estimated 2,446 children ages 14 years and under die in motor vehicle crashes each year. Thankfully, there are many things you can do to reduce the risk of injury in a car crash – one of them is as easy as being a good example. Always use your seat belt.

Rear-facing Car Seat tips

- ★ Rear-facing child seats should be used for infants as long as possible – up to the height or weight limit specified by the seat manufacturer. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children ride rear-facing until at least two years old. Be sure to check your specific seat for height and weight limits.
- ★ Read the car seat and vehicle owners' manuals to ensure the seat is installed properly.
- ★ Position the harness straps so they are at or below the child's shoulders.
- ★ Make sure the harness straps are buckled, properly positioned, and snug.
- ★ Make sure the chest clip is at armpit level.
- ★ If installed properly, the car seat should not move more than one inch in any direction.
- ★ Never put a rear-facing car seat in front of an active airbag.
- ★ Children are always safest in the back seat.

Forward-facing Car Seat Tips

- ★ Forward-facing car seats should be used once a child has reached the maximum weight or height limit of a rear-facing seat.
- ★ Use a forward-facing car seat with a harness until the child reaches the height or weight limits specified by the seat's manufacturer before transitioning into a booster seat.
- ★ Read the car seat and vehicle owners' manuals to ensure the seat is installed properly.
- ★ Position harness straps so they are at or above the child's shoulders.
- ★ Some convertible seats require the use of top slots when the seat is forward-facing; be sure to read the car seat manual carefully.
- ★ Make sure the harness straps are buckled, properly positioned, and snug.
- ★ Make sure the chest clip is at armpit level.
- ★ If installed properly, the car seat should not move more than one inch in any direction.

Booster Seat Tips

- ★ Booster seats should be used for children once they have outgrown the forward-facing car seat.
- ★ Use a belt positioning booster seat until the child reaches a height of 4 feet 9 inches and is between 8 and 12 years of age.
- ★ Use a booster seat with the vehicle lap AND shoulder belt. Be sure the seat belt is properly buckled.
- ★ Never place the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.
- ★ Use a booster seat correctly in a back seat every time your child rides in a vehicle.
- ★ Children should ride in the back seat away from airbags until they are 13 years old.

