



Car Seat & Safety Belt Recommendations

The 4 Steps for Kids include:

1. Infants ride rear-facing in infant car seats/rear-facing convertible car seats until they weigh at least 20 pounds AND are at least 1 year of age.
2. Forward-facing toddler seats from age 1 and at least 20 pounds to around age four and at least 40 pounds.
3. Boosters seats from about 4 years old and at least 40 pounds to age 8, unless 4'9".
4. Lap and shoulder safety belts at age 8 or older and 4'9" tall. Children under 13 should ride in a back seat of the vehicle.

Proper use of child safety seats and safety belts is critical for all family members. These rules should help families to use their car seat and seat belts correctly:

1. **Read both the car seat instructions and the vehicle owner's manual before installing car seats.**
2. **All children under 13 should ride in a back seat.**
3. **When installing your child's car seat place your weight on the car seat. Lock the seat belt according to the instructions on the seat belt or in the vehicle owner's manual. Check the installation and allow no more than 1 inch of side-to-side or forward movement.**
4. **Infants should ride-rear facing and semi-reclined to no more than 45 degrees, until at least age 1 and 20 pounds. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends keeping children rear-facing to the highest weight or height allowed by the child safety seat's manufacturer. Remember NEVER place a rear-facing infant in front of an active passenger side air bag.**
5. **The harness is placed in the slots at or below the shoulders for rear-facing car seats. Tighten the harness until it lies in a relatively straight line without any slack or sagging but not so tight as to press into the child's body causing discomfort. Adjust the harness retainer clip to armpit level (following manufacturer instructions).**
6. **Toddlers ride forward-facing and upright once they reach at least 1 year and 20 pounds. Children should stay in the forward-facing child safety seat with a harness until they are at least 40 pounds. Place the harness through the reinforced slots on the child safety seat (following manufacturer instructions). Tighten the harness until it lies in a relatively straight line without any slack or sagging as indicated in 4 above. Place the harness retainer clip at armpit level.**
7. **NHTSA recommends that all children who have outgrown child safety seats be properly restrained in a booster seat until they are at least age eight and approximately 4 feet 9 inches tall. Use a belt-positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt properly adjusted over the hips and shoulder to fit a small child.**
8. **Children should stay in a belt-positioning booster seat until the lap and shoulder belt fit them correctly.**
9. **For children age eight through adult, it is important to use a properly positioned safety belt. Properly positioned means that the shoulder belt is across the center of the chest and shoulder and the lap belt is low and snug across the hips. NEVER place the shoulder belt behind the back or under the arm.**
10. **The safety belt will properly fit a child when the child can sit with their back and buttocks against the vehicle seat back and their knees bend at the front edge of the vehicle seat without slouching. Children should be able to keep their fit flat on the floor. The safety belt is positioned properly across the body and they are able to stay comfortably seated this way for the entire trip.**
11. **BUCKLE UP EVERY TIME, EVERY RIDE!**

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