

A young child with dark hair is sitting in a car seat, smiling. The car seat has purple and grey padding. The child is wearing a white shirt and blue pants. The car seat is buckled up. The background shows the interior of a car.

YOUR CHILD AND CAR SEAT SAFETY



Hasbro Children's Hospital

The Pediatric Division of Rhode Island Hospital

A Lifespan Partner

All for one.

WHY USE CHILD CAR SEATS?

1. IT'S YOUR JOB!

One of the most important jobs you have as a parent is keeping your child safe. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the use of child car safety seats in passenger vehicles, when used correctly, reduces the risk of death by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers ages 1 to 4 years. Booster seat use reduces the risk of serious injury for children ages 4 to 8 years by 45 percent when compared with seat belt use alone, and for older children and adults, seat belt use reduces the risk for death and serious injury by approximately half.

2. IT'S THE LAW!

Under Rhode Island law, all children must be properly restrained in a child restraint system in the rear of the vehicle if they are younger than 8 years old, unless they are at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall and weigh at least 80 pounds. Children who are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall and 80 pounds must be properly restrained by the vehicle seat belt.



GUIDELINES

FOR CAR SEAT

SAFETY

TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE WHEN RIDING IN A VEHICLE, ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

- Select a car seat that fits in your vehicle and is appropriate for your child's age and size. Use it every time your child rides in the vehicle.
- Refer to the car seat manufacturer's instructions and to the vehicle owner's manual for information on how to install the car seat. Check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- Keep your child in the back seat at least until the child is 13 years old.
- Never allow a child to sit in front of an airbag. Airbags can injure or kill children in a crash that might otherwise have been survivable.
- Use your seat belt to provide a good example for your child and help make safety a habit.

There are many different car seats on the market. The type of seat your child needs depends on your child's age, weight and height and the type of vehicle you have:



INFANTS AND TODDLERS should ride in a rear-facing car seat in the vehicle's back seat until they reach the maximum height and weight for the seat, at least until they reach their second birthday. A recent study shows that children younger than 2 years old are 75 percent less likely to die or be severely injured in a crash if they are riding in a rear-facing seat, which has a harness and in a crash cradles and moves with the child to reduce the stress to the child's fragile neck and spinal cord. The harness straps must be snugly secured at or below the shoulders and the harness clip must be secured across the child's chest at armpit level.

CHILDREN WHO REACH THE MAXIMUM HEIGHT OR WEIGHT FOR A REAR-FACING SEAT should ride in a forward-facing car seat in the vehicle's back seat. Always read the manufacturer's instructions for size limits. You should continue to keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and top tether for as long as possible. The harness and top tether provides upper torso, head, and neck protection. The harness straps must be snugly secured at or above the child's shoulders and the harness clip must be secured across the child's chest at armpit level.

There are different types of rear-facing car seats. Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing. Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time.



CHILDREN WHO HAVE REACHED THE MAXIMUM WEIGHT OR HEIGHT FOR A FORWARD-FACING SEAT with a harness should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat in the back seat, with the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt securely fastened. The booster seat raises and positions your child so that the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt fit properly. The lap belt prevents injury to the child's abdomen and the shoulder belt protects the child's upper body. In the event of a crash, an adult seat belt that does not fit a child properly can actually cause injury.



MOST CHILDREN WHO HAVE REACHED 4 FEET 9 INCHES TALL AND ARE BETWEEN 8 AND 12 YEARS OLD can use a seat belt in the back seat. Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. To fit properly:

- The lap belt must lie snugly across the upper hips, not the stomach.
- The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face.
- Your child should be able to sit all the way back in the seat and comfortably bend his or her knees at the edge of the seat.

REMEMBER:

Your child should always ride in the back seat because it's safer there.



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INSTALLATION OF CAR SEATS

Car seats should be installed using the LATCH system (lower anchors and tethers for children) or the vehicle seat belt. Vehicles manufactured after September 2002 have the LATCH installed in at least two positions in the rear seat. Be sure to check your owner's manual for weight limits when using the LATCH system to install your child's car seat.

Most car seats should only be used for six years from the date of manufacture, which can be found on the car seat label. You will also find an expiration date stamped onto the back of all car seats. You should mail in the registration card or register the seat online so that you can be notified if the car seat is recalled.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CAR SAFETY SEATS AND OTHER WAYS TO KEEP KIDS SAFE, PLEASE CONTACT:

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