

Car Safety Seats

Use the Seat That's Right For Your Child and Use It Correctly

Car safety seats can only protect your child if they are used on **every** trip and used the way the manufacturer says.

The car safety seat must be belted to the car correctly, and the child must be harnessed into the seat correctly **every time** the child rides in the car. Children should face the rear of the vehicle until they are at least 1 year old and weigh at least 20 lbs. A convertible car safety seat may be used rear facing up to 20 lbs. and 1 year of age, then turned around for use up to 40 lbs. and may be used as long as the child fits well. A belt-positioning booster should be used when the child has outgrown the convertible seat but is too small to use the vehicle's safety belts. Vehicle safety belts should not be used alone until the shoulder belt can be positioned across the chest with the lap belt snug across the thighs. This is usually at approximately 4 feet 9 inches in height or 80 lbs. in weight.

Remember: Safety seats and seat belts can significantly decrease the number of deaths and serious injuries in accidents. In North Carolina, children are required to be in safety seats or seat belts by law.

A rear facing car seat should not be placed on the front seat. Children should ride in the back seat until age 12.

Update – April 2011

In a new policy published in April 2011, the AAP recommends that your child be rear-facing either in an infant car seat or a convertible car seat until age 2 years. After your child has exceeded the weight or height limits for an infant car seat we recommend the purchase of a convertible car seat. To accommodate for weight and length, we recommend that you purchase a convertible seat with a rear facing weight limit of at least 35 pounds and height limit of at least 40 inches. Please refer to www.aap.org for additional information.

This new policy is recommended by the AAP and endorsed by Raleigh Pediatrics, but is currently not required by the state of North Carolina.

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