

Car Seat Safety

Rear-facing Babies & Toddlers

- Keep your infant in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat for as long as possible – up to the height or weight limit of the car seat. The “12 months and 20 lbs” rule often cited is the bare minimum to turn a child forward-facing. Rear-facing children are safest!
- Once your child outgrows the infant seat, move her to a rear-facing convertible seat and use until she reaches the weight/height limit allowed by the manufacturer (that could be 30–40 lbs). Many kids will be over age 2 when they reach that weight.
- A rear-facing car seat should be semi-reclined so that baby’s head stays in contact with the seat and does not flop forward. This is important to keep the baby’s airway open.
- The shoulder straps should be through the slots at or below the child’s shoulders.
- Never put a rear-facing car seat in front of an active frontal airbag.

Forward-facing Children

- Once your child outgrows the car seat’s rear-facing weight or height limit, turn the child around to be forward-facing. The car seat should be in the upright position.
- The shoulder straps should be through the slots at or above the child’s shoulders.
- Keep your child in a car seat with a full harness until they reach the weight or height limit of that seat (usually 40 lbs or 40 inches).

Booster Age Children

- When your child outgrows their car seat, move them to a booster seat.
- Always use the vehicle lap & shoulder belt with a booster seat, NEVER a lap belt only.

For All Seats

- If your car seat has a harness, be sure the chest clip is at armpit level on your child.
- Be sure the harness is snug on your child’s shoulders, with NO slack.
- Use the seat belt or LATCH system to lock the car seat into the car, but NOT both.
- The car seat should not move more than one inch from side to side, or front to back. Grab the car seat at the seat belt or LATCH path to test for tightness.
- Every car seat has an expiration date. Do not use an expired seat.
- Never buy a used car seat if you do not know its full history.
- Never use a car seat that has been in a crash.
- Children should not wear bulky clothing under harness straps.
- Do not use products that did not come with your car seat (in or with the seat).
- Add-on toys can injure your child in a crash.

--- Source: Safe Kids Michigan (<http://michigansafekids.org/car-seat-safety-info.htm>)

Furnished by Ingham Great Start Collaborative (www.inghamgreatstart.org)