

FOR YOUR family

Safe Seating Position for Children: Tips to make your child safer in a crash

Choose a child safety seat that fits your child's age and size



- A rear-facing seat until your child is at least 1 year *and* at least 20 pounds.
- A forward-facing seat with harness until your child is too tall or too heavy for the seat. This is usually when the ears reach the top of the seat or the child weighs 40 pounds — check the seat instructions to be sure.
- A belt-positioning booster seat until an adult seat belt fits properly. This means the shoulder belt lies across the chest, the lap belt lies on the upper thighs, and the child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with legs bent at the knees and feet hanging down — usually around 4 foot 9 inches.
- A lap-and-shoulder seat belt once the adult seat belt fits properly.

Place your child in a safe spot

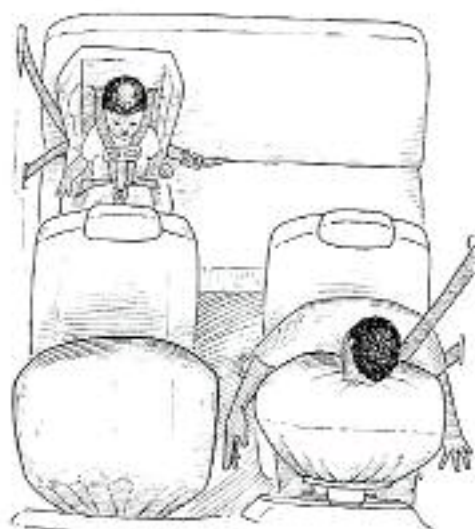
- Plan ahead. Never transport more children than there are seat belts in your vehicle.
- Never place an infant in a rear-facing seat in the front seat with an active airbag.
- If an older child must ride in the front seat, move the vehicle seat back as far as it can go, away from the airbag. Pick the child who is most likely to sit in the proper position; this may be a child in a forward-facing child safety seat. Be sure the child is in the right safety seat or booster seat for his age and size.

Use of belts and tethers

- Use lap-and-shoulder belts for children in booster seats and for older children using the seat belt alone. These belts can also be used to install a child safety seat.
- The rear center seat may have a lap-only belt. A lap-only belt can be used for a child safety seat but *never* for a belt-positioning booster seat and preferably not for children big enough to use the seat belt alone.
- If your vehicle has LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children), you may want to use it to install your child safety seat. LATCH is usually in the rear side seats.
- Always use the top tether of a forward-facing safety seat.

Things to think about when buying a family car

- What type and how many safety seats or seat belts will you need?
- Will your safety seats fit in the car? Not all safety seats fit in all vehicles and all seating positions.
- Is it a safe car for families? Compact pickup trucks and sports cars are not good family cars.
- Does the vehicle have safety features such as lap-and-shoulder seat belts in the rear-center seat, adjustable shoulder belts in the rear side seats, built-in child safety seats or LATCH?
- Is there an airbag on/off switch? A child with special healthcare needs who must ride in the front seat for medical reasons needs a vehicle with an airbag on/off switch set in the "off" position.
- Read the car owner's manual to learn about its safety features — especially for used cars.



The safest place for all infants and children younger than 13 years is in the back seat.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for medical care and advice of your family's physician. There may be variations in treatment that your family's physician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. artwork provided by the Transportation Safety Training Center, Virginia Commonwealth University.

