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Forward-Facing Car Seat Guide

As parents, it's up to us to make wise choices to keep our children safe from harm. This includes making sure we're always using the appropriate car seat for our children, and that we're using it in the correct way.

According to the NHTSA, three out of every four children are either improperly restrained in their car seats or not restrained at all! With motor vehicle crashes being the #1 killer of children ages 3-14 in our nation, the need for education and action is clear. This guide from iRideSafe™ provides important tips on how to install and position your child in a forward-facing car seat and when to transition your child to a booster seat.

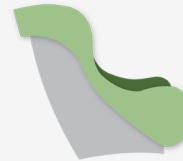


Knowing when to transition from rear-facing to forward-facing can be confusing - even for seasoned parents. Remember that with every step forward (i.e., from rear-facing to forward-facing to booster to seat belt only) there is a reduction in the level of protection and safety - so it's very important that you do not transition prematurely to the next stage.

The best practice according to safety experts is to keep your child rear-facing as long as possible - until he or she meets the height or weight limit for the rear-facing car seat. In fact, children between the ages of 1 and 2 are FIVE times LESS likely to die or be seriously injured in a crash when restrained rear-facing rather than forward-facing. In a rear-facing car seat the crash forces are distributed throughout the torso and head, providing a cocooning effect for the child.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that "all infants and toddlers ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are 2 years of age, or until they reach the height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer." At that time, it is permissible to turn your child forward-facing.

Types of Forward-Facing Car Seats



When purchasing a forward-facing car seat, it's important to understand the different types available.

Convertible Car Seat

This type can be used rear or forward-facing. Convertible 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.

Combination Car Seat

This type can be used forward-facing or as a high back booster seat.

All in One Car Seat

This type of seat can be used rear-facing, forward-facing and be used as a high back and backless booster seat.

Whichever type you select, always check the height and weight limits to ensure the proper usage for your child.

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TAKE THE "INCH-TEST"

Once your child's car seat is installed, make sure it is secure by doing the "inch-test". Using both hands, testing at the belt path location move the seat from left to right. The seat should not move more than an inch in either direction.



TAKE THE "HARNES PINCH-TEST"

Make sure your child's car seat harness is adjusted properly by doing the "harness pinch-test". If after you've buckled your child into his/her car seat, you can still pinch the fabric of the harness-straps between your fingers, the harness is too loose. It must be tightened. Pull on the tail of the strap to tighten.



DOUBLE CHECK THE RETAINER CLIP

The retainer clip should line up with your child's armpits, never over their soft tummies.



OTHER IMPORTANT SAFETY TIPS

- To secure your car seat to your vehicle seat, do not use both the vehicle seat belt and the LATCH system at the same time.
- Check the expiration date on the car seat before installing. Never use an expired car seat, as it may not meet current federal standards and could have recalled parts that are not safe for your child.
- Avoid using a second-hand or used car seat or one that has been involved in a car crash. An expired or damaged seat could compromise your child's safety.
- Register your car seat to ensure that you are notified about any recalls. You can register online at safercar.gov or by filling out the registration card that came with your car seat.
- Never hold a child in your lap while riding in a vehicle, or place them in the front seat of a vehicle, as it could put your child's life in serious danger in the event of a crash.
- For proper installation information, always refer to your car seat owner's manual and your vehicle owner's manual.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Your child's safety is important to us! Please make sure they are always buckled up in the appropriate car seat. Below are some additional resources to help keep your family safe on the road.

Watch Car Seat Installation Videos at iridesafe.com.

Including easy-to-follow videos with steps to help you install your child's car seat and ensure that your child is properly restrained while riding in a vehicle.

Register Your Car Seat at safercar.gov

Search for Car Seat Recalls at NHTSA.gov

NEXT STEPS

Transition your child to a booster seat once they have reached the maximum height or weight limit of the forward-facing car seat. Remember that with every step forward there is a reduction in the level of protection and safety. So please don't rush to the next stage, as it could put your child at unnecessary risk.

Children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat of the vehicle whenever possible.
The back seat is the safest position for children.



**See our Booster Seat Guide
at iridesafe.com**

Sources: nhtsa.gov, safercar.gov, aap.org (American Academy of Pediatrics), Henary B, Sherwood C, Crandall J, et al. Car Safety Seats for Children: Rear-Facing for Best Protection. Injury Prevention, 2007

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