

## American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

### Car Safety Seats: Information for Families



One of the most important jobs you have as a parent is keeping your child safe when riding in a vehicle. Each year thousands of young children are killed or injured in car crashes. Proper use of car seats helps keep children safe. But with so many different car seats on the market, it's no wonder many parents find this overwhelming.

The type of car seat your child needs depends on several things, including your child's size, weight, and height. Also the type of vehicle you have. The following information from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) offers guidance on choosing the most appropriate car seat for your child.

#### Types of Car Safety Seats at a Glance

Age Group	Type of Seat	General Guidelines
<u>Infants</u>	Rear-facing-only and rear-facing convertible seats	All infants and toddlers should ride in a Rear-Facing Car Seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer. At a bare minimum, 2 years of age.
<u>Toddlers/Preschoolers</u>	Convertible seats and forward-facing seats with harnesses	All children 2 years or older, or those younger than 2 years who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their car seat, should use a Forward-Facing Car Seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer.
<u>School-aged Children</u>	Booster seats	All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their car safety seat should use a Belt-Positioning Booster Seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are between 8 and 12 years of age. When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use Lap and Shoulder Seat Belts for optimal protection.
<u>Older Children</u>	Seat belts	All children younger than 13 years should be restrained in the Rear Seats of vehicles for optimal protection from airbag deployment.

"Parents often look forward to transitioning from one stage to the next, but these transitions should generally be delayed until they're necessary, when the child fully outgrows the limits for his or her current stage," said Dennis Durbin, MD, FAAP, lead author of the AAP Child Passenger Safety policy statement and accompanying technical report.

"A rear-facing child safety seat does a better job of supporting the head, neck and spine of infants and toddlers in a crash, because it distributes the force of the collision over the entire body," Dr. Durbin said. "For larger children, a forward-facing seat with a harness is safer than a booster, and a belt-positioning booster seat provides better protection than a seat belt alone until the seat belt fits correctly."

- See more at: <http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/AAP-Updates-Recommendation-on-Car-Seats.aspx#sthash.NGoIWtHr.dpuf>