



Child Safety Seat Checkup Tips

Does your child ride in the back seat?

Children 12 and under should ride properly restrained in the back. The back seat is the safer seat for children.

Does your child ride facing the right way?

Infants should ride in rear facing restraints in the back seat until at least 1 year old and at least 20 pounds. Always read your child restraint manual for instructions on properly using the restraint. It's possible that the manufacturer of your child safety seat might allow infants larger than 20 pounds and older than 1 year to remain rear facing. In that case, keep your child rear-facing for as long as the manufacturer recommends. After your child reaches the weight, height and age limit for rear-facing in your particular safety seat, switch to forward facing.

Does the safety belt hold the seat tightly in place?

Put the belt through the correct pathway. If your safety seat can be used as both rear and front facing, use the correct belt path for each direction. Check the vehicle owner's manual and child safety seat manual for instructions.

Is the harness buckled snugly around your child?

Keep the harness straps snug over the child's shoulders. You may need to move the harness straps up to higher slots as the child grows. Place the chest clip at armpit level.

Does your child over 40 pounds have the best protection possible?

Keep your child in a safety seat with a full harness as long as possible, at least until 40 pounds. Then use a belt-positioning booster seat, which helps the adult lap and shoulder belt fit better. It is used with the adult lap and shoulder belt. A belt-positioning booster seat is appropriate for children of about 40-80 pounds.

How should a safety belt fit an older child?

The child should be tall enough to sit without slouching, with back against the seat and knees bent at the edge of the seat. The lap belt must fit low and tight across the upper thighs. The shoulder belt should rest over the shoulder and across the chest. Never put the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the child's back. The adult lap and shoulder belt system alone will not fit most children without a booster seat until they are at least 4'9" tall and about 8 years old. Children should remain in safety belts in the back seat through age 12.

Has a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician checked your child restraint?

Certified technicians are trained to check for proper installation and use of child restraints, and are good resources for information.