

The following tips apply to both forward and rear facing car seats.

- ★ Car seats should fit tight using the vehicle seat belt.
- ★ The seat should not move more than one inch side to side, or toward the front of the vehicle.
- ★ If the seat does not stay tight, a locking clip may be needed. Consult your vehicle owner's manual to find out if your seat belt needs one.
- ★ Any car or booster seat should be replaced if it has been in a crash.
- ★ Make sure any car or booster seat you use has a label identifying that it meets Federal Safety Standards.
- ★ Never place a car or booster seat in front of an air bag.

### Tips for seat belt usage

- ★ Shoulder belt fits across mid-chest and shoulder.
- ★ Do not put shoulder belts under the arms of children or behind their back.
- ★ Place lap belt low and snug across thighs. Lap/shoulder belts can be retrofit in some vehicles.
- ★ The Federal Safety Standard does not cover seat belt adjusters and some may actually interfere with proper fit.

*Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics is committed to keeping children safe. Together we will reduce the number of child injuries in motor vehicles.*

## Important Numbers

**Children's Mercy Hospital**  
(816) 234-3000  
[www.childrens-mercy.org](http://www.childrens-mercy.org)

**NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline**  
1 (888) 327-4236  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

**Safety and Health Council**  
(816) 842-5223

For a child safety seat inspection by a certified technician, call **1-866-SEAT-CHECK** or visit [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org). For more information, visit [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) or call the Car Seat Program 816-234-1607 or email [plarimore@cmh.edu](mailto:plarimore@cmh.edu)

*This brochure contains general guidelines from the Center for Childhood Safety of Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics. For additional information regarding specific vehicles and car seats, please refer to instruction manuals. Also, be sure to make an appointment with a child seat technician to demonstrate how to properly install your car seat.*



How high is the sky?<sup>SM</sup>

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08/04

# Car Seat Program



Nothing is more important than your child's safety





Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics Child Passenger Safety Guidelines



Children should remain in booster seats until they reach the seat's upper weight limit or they are able to ride with their knees bent at the seat edge (without slouching), and their seat belt fits low over their hips and thighs and snug over their shoulders.



As of September 1, 2002, LATCH – Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children, a system designed to make child safety seat installation easier without using seat belts – was required on most child safety seats and vehicles manufactured. New LATCH-equipped child safety seats have connectors that fasten directly to special anchors in LATCH-equipped vehicles.

When it comes to the well-being of your child, nothing should be left to chance, especially in a motor vehicle. Nearly 80% of child seats are incorrectly installed, leading to thousands of preventable injuries each year. This guide serves as a starting point to understanding how to properly select and install your car seat as your child grows.



Choosing a seat that's right for your child

The best car seat for your child is one that fits the child and fits the car.

Children less than 1 year old and under 20 pounds ride in the back seat facing the rear until they are both 1 year old and weigh 20 pounds. For babies that weigh more than 20 pounds and are less than one year in age, look for a rear facing seat with a weight limit of 30 pounds. The seat should be placed at a 45-degree angle. The harness straps should be at or below the shoulders with room for no more than one finger between the straps and collarbone, and the chest clip should be at armpit level. Never place a car or booster seat in front of an air bag.

Children over 1 year old and more than 20 pounds ride in the back seat facing forward. Harness straps should be in the top slots, at or above the shoulders with room for no more than one finger between the straps and collarbone, and the chest clip should be at armpit level. Children should continue to ride in a seat facing forward as long as their ears are below the top of the back seat and their shoulders are below the top seat strap slots, or until they reach the upper weight limit of their seat (40 pounds).

Children between 40 and 80 pounds ride in a booster seat with a lap-shoulder seat belt. Seat belts alone do not fit these children. Seats vary according to the child's weight. A high back booster seat is required to protect the head and neck in cases where the child's ears are above the top of the car seat. Convertible car/booster seats are available for children who weigh 20-80 pounds.



Remember, children are safest when properly restrained in the back seat.

The best car seat for your child is one that fits the child and fits the car.

