

Right Seat ▶ Right Use ▶ Right Time

WWW.CARSAFETYNOW.ORG



KEEP CHILDREN REAR-FACING UNTIL AT LEAST AGE 2:

- Start your child in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat. Rear-face until they reach the upper weight and height limits of the seat, even past age 2.
- If your child outgrows their car seat before age 2, change to a seat with higher rear-facing weight and height limits.
- Keep rear-facing as long as possible up to the limits of the seat (even up to age 4).
- Leg crowding is expected and does not harm the child.

Here's Why:

- A rear-facing car seat moves with your child and absorbs crash forces.
- Cradles child to reduce harm to neck and spine.
- Children under 2 are more vulnerable and likely to be injured if forward facing.

1



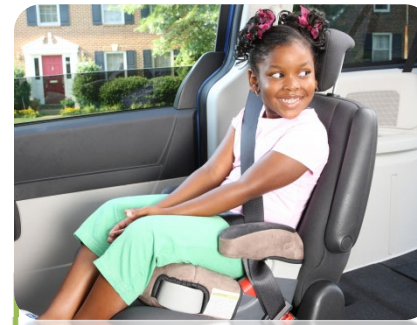
KEEP CHILDREN IN CAR SEATS WITH HARNESES UNTIL AT LEAST AGE 5:

- When your child outgrows the rear-facing seat, use a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether in the back seat.
- Remember to keep rear-facing as long as possible before turning forward.
- Use a car seat with a harness and tether until at least age 5, or until they reach the upper height and weight limits for the harness.

Here's Why:

- Harnesses spread crash forces over strong parts of the body.
- Harnesses keep the child's body properly positioned in a crash.
- The tether limits head injuries by reducing car seat movement in a crash.

2



KEEP CHILDREN IN BOOSTER SEATS UNTIL THE SEAT BELT FITS and UNTIL 4'9":

- When your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with harness, use a booster seat in the back seat.
- Use a booster seat until the belt fits correctly (see next step).
- A booster seat is often needed until 4 ft 9 in (57") tall. Your child may be 12 years old before ready for an adult safety belt.

Here's Why:

- A booster raises a child up so the belt rests over strong parts of the body.
- Decreases stomach, neck, and spine injuries.
- Discourages kids from putting the shoulder belt under their arm or behind their back, which causes harm in a crash.

3



KEEP CHILDREN BELTED IN THE BACK SEAT UNTIL AGE 13:

- Children should ride in a lap and shoulder seat belt in the back seat once they outgrow a booster seat.
- Kids are ready for a seat belt when: (1) The shoulder strap crosses the center of the chest and rests on the shoulder (not the neck). (2) The lap belt fits low on the hips, touching the upper thighs (not the stomach). (3) Knees can bend when sitting all the way back in the seat, and feet are flat on the floor.
- Use the back seat for kids under 13.

Here's Why:

- A seat belt keeps the child inside the vehicle in a crash.
- Spreads crash forces.
- Protects head and spine.
- Back seat is safer than the front.

4