

Selecting the Appropriate Safety Seat for Your Child

1. Keep your baby facing the rear of the car until at least age two, longer if weight/height maximum allows.
2. Keep your child in a seat with a harness as long as possible (4 years minimum; longer if weight/height maximum allows).
3. Keep your older child in a booster seat until he or she fits properly in the lap and shoulder belts in the car. To find out if your child is ready to wear just a safety belt, try the 5-Step Test at the bottom of this chart.

Type of Seat	Child's Age	Child's Weight (check mfr. instr.)	Child's Height	Comments
Rear-facing-only (must face rear of car)	Newborn to about 9-12 months or more	Minimum: none or 3-5 lbs. Maximum: 22-40 lbs. Check instructions.	Child's head must be at least one inch below top edge of seat.	Most models have detachable base that stays in car. May be sold as part of stroller system.
Convertible (may be used rear facing or forward facing)	Newborn until harness outgrown	Minimum: birth or 3-5 lbs. Maximum: 30-50 lbs. rear facing; 40-85 lbs. forward facing. Check instructions.	Rear facing: Child's head must be at least one inch below top edge of seat. Forward facing: shoulders must be at or below level of top strap slots.	Some convertibles can also be used as boosters when harness is removed. Use rear facing until at least age two. Tether forward facing.
Forward-facing seat with harness	At least age 2 until harness outgrown	Minimum: 22-30 lbs. Maximum: 40-80 lbs. Check instructions.	Shoulders must be at or below level of top strap slots.	Harness must be used. Tether forward facing.
Combination (forward facing only; harness is removable)	At least age 2 until harness outgrown, then use as booster until child can pass 5-Step Test	Minimum: 22-30 lbs. with harness Maximum: 40-90 lbs. with harness Booster: 30-120 lbs. Check instructions.	Remove harness if child has outgrown harness weight or shoulders are above top strap slots. Head must be supported up to top of ears.	Some models have higher strap slots than those in convertible seats. When used as booster, make sure lap belt is positioned low on thighs. Tether forward facing with harness.
Belt-positioning booster (no harness included)	For children who have outgrown seat with harness	30-40 lbs. up to 80-120 lbs. Many require age 4 or older. Check instructions.	Child's head must be supported up to top of ears. If vehicle seatback is low, use booster with backrest.	Must be used with lap and shoulder belt. Recommend booster with removable back and adjustable headrest.
Special products	Birth to adult	Birth to 160 lbs.	Various	Car beds, harnesses, large seats for children with special needs.
Vehicle safety belt only	For children who pass the 5-Step Test. Depends on vehicle, child's size, and behavior.	The 5-Step Test The child is ready for a safety belt if the answer to every question is 'yes.' 1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat? 2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat? 3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm? 4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs? 5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?		

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