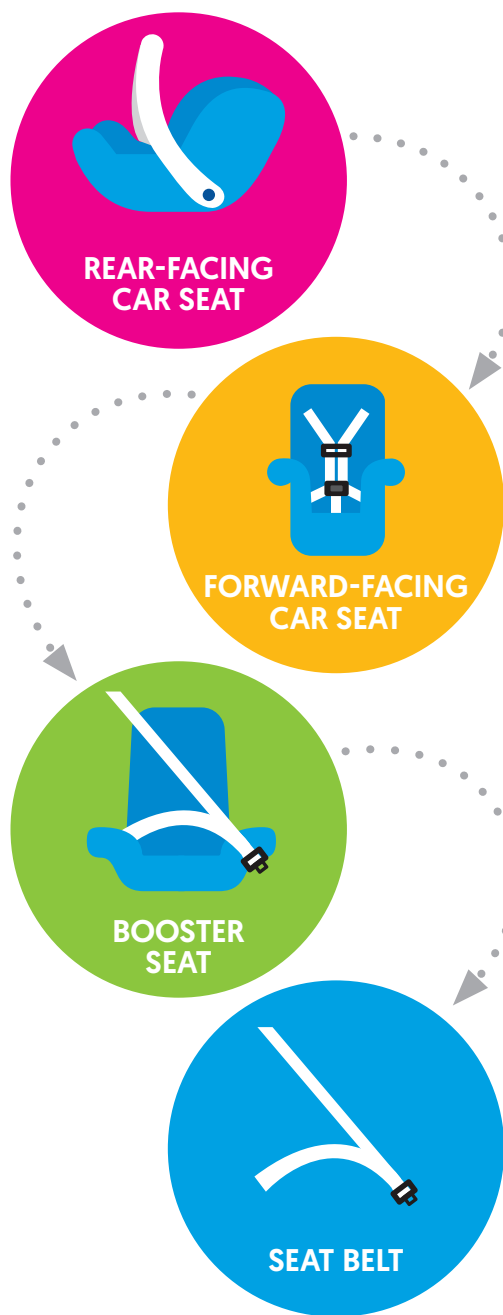


Protecting Your Child with the Proper Car Seat

The BEST car seat is the one that fits your child, fits your vehicle, and is easy for you to use correctly every time. To provide the best protection for your child, properly securing them in the appropriate car safety seats, booster seats, or safety belts every time is the best defense.

The Four Stages of Protection for Your Child In a Car

												AGE (YEARS)
BIRTH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
Rear-Facing Car Seat												
				Forward-Facing Car Seat								
				Booster Seat								
										Seat Belt		



BIRTH – 3 YEARS

Your child under age 3 should always ride in a rear-facing car seat. Always use the tether to secure these car seats to your car. Refer to the owner’s manual for tethering a car seat. There are different types of rear-facing car seats:



Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing. Usually up to 30 inches in height. Note: in these car seats, children outgrow in height before weight.



Convertible and all-in-one car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time. These car seats can be used in full term infants coming home from hospital. Check the minimum height and weight limitations.

As of October 2018 the AAP and CDC recommend keeping toddlers rear facing until 3 years of age.

3 – 7 YEARS

When your child is 3 years old, he or she is ready to travel in a forward-facing, 5-point harness car seat with a tether. Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat’s manufacturer. Check your car seat’s manufacturer’s installation guidelines. To avoid latch failure in a crash, check the maximum child weight for using the latch vs. seat belt for install of car seat.

4 – 11 YEARS

Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat’s manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it’s time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat of the vehicle. High back booster is safer than a no back booster.

11 – 12 YEARS

Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For children, this is not until they are **at least 57 inches or 4’ 9” tall**. For a seat belt to fit properly the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember: your child should still ride in the back seat because it’s safer there.

In Texas, you must be at least 12 years of age to ride in the front seat.

Every time you move to the next stage, LESS protection is provided. So, don’t be in a hurry to move them!

Always follow BOTH the safety seat instructions and the vehicle owner’s manual for proper installation.