

Safety with Car Seats and Booster Seats



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Correctly using a car seat can save your child's life. These are the car seat safety guidelines to keep your child safe. **Ohio's child passenger law requires children under 8 years old must use a car seat or booster seat if they are less than 4 feet 9 inches tall.**

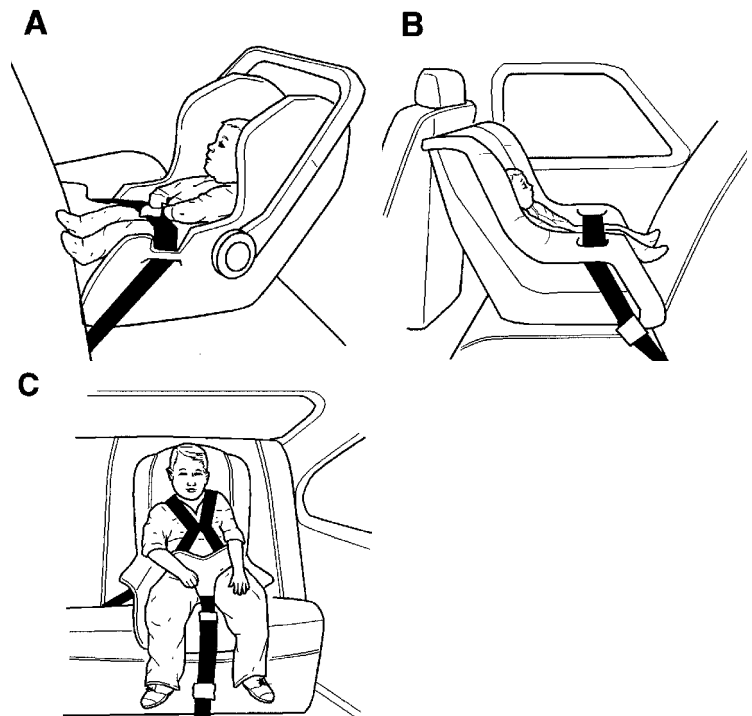
Choose a car seat

- Choose a car seat that fits your child's age, weight and height, and fits well in your vehicle.
- Read the safety manual that comes with your child's car seat for how to correctly install the car seat in your vehicle. Attend a car seat safety check in your community to ensure a good fit.
- Check the expiration date sticker on your car seat. The date is chosen by the car seat maker and is based on the date it was made, not the date of purchase or the start of use. Most car seats expire in 5 or 6 years.
- Once you choose a car seat, register it with the manufacturer so you can receive recall notices. Just send in the card that came with your car seat or fill out a simple form on the manufacturer's web site.

Four steps to safety

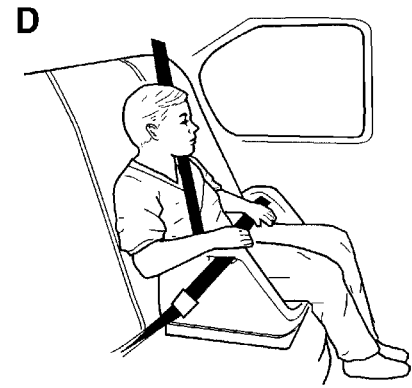
Use these four steps to keep your child safe in vehicles as they grow and age:

- 1. Rear-facing car seat (A - infant or B - convertible) placed in the back seat:**
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that **children ride in a rear-facing seat until they reach the upper height and weight limits of their seat or until they are 2 years old.** Riding rear-facing is safest for infants and toddlers.
- 2. Forward-facing car seat (C - convertible) placed in the back seat:**
When children outgrow their rear-facing seat, **use a forward-facing car seat with an internal harness until they reach the upper height and weight limits for their car seat.**



3. Booster seat (D) placed in the back seat:

When children reach the upper limit of their forward-facing car seat, Ohio law requires that **children ride in a booster seat until they are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall** or 8 years old. They can move to a seat belt when the lap belt lies across the upper legs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest, not the neck, often between 8 to 12 years of age.



4. Adult seat belt in the back seat until your child is at least 13 years old:

Children who have outgrown their booster seats should ride in the back seat until they are at least 13 years old. Ohio law requires children aged 8 to 15 years, who are not secured in a car seat or booster seat, to be secured by the vehicle seat belt. The safest thing is for **all passengers over 8 years of age to wear a seat belt at all times.**

Car seat safety tips

- **When using a rear-facing (infant or convertible) car seat**, keep harness straps snug and fasten the harness clip at armpit level. Harness straps should be at or below the shoulder level. Place the car seat at a 30 to 45 degree angle to keep the infant's head from dropping forward, according to the seat instruction manual. Put the infant car seat carrying handle down. Rolled towels or rolled receiving blankets can be placed along the sides of the child for more support. Never place padding under or behind the infant.
- **When using forward-facing (convertible) car seat**, harness straps should be in the upper slots, at or above the shoulders. Place the car seat in the upright position. Fasten harness clip at armpit level and keep straps snug.

For more information

- Safe Kids Central Ohio and Columbus Public Health offer a Child Safety Seat Distribution Program to provide reduced cost car seats to families in need and Child Safety Seat Check Up Events. Call (614) 645-7748 or visit www.safekidscentralohio.org.
- Call SeatCheck at 1-866-SEAT-CHECK to find a free car seat inspection location or visit www.seatcheck.org.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

The Library for Health Information is available to help you find more health information at (614) 293-3707 or e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.