



If I still have questions, where can I get more information?

Go to www.nationwidechildrens.org/kiss. You can find a car seat app that can help you choose your child's seat as well as other websites to help you with the specific car seat, and free car seat fitting stations so your child can be in a car seat that fits them and is installed correctly.

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Safety Series

Car Seat Safety



*Helping you, as a parent,
to make healthy and safe choices.*



The questions and answers in this brochure are designed to help you, as a parent, to make healthy and safe choices for your children.



What's the best car seat?

The best seat for your child is one that meets federal safety standards, has a 5 point harness system, is priced within your budget and fits your child's age, weight and height. The seat should also fit your vehicle, be easy to use and correctly installed before every trip. All car seats have an expiration date. Check the seat or contact the manufacturer for the date on your seat.

- » ALWAYS refer to the manufacturer's guidelines for weight and height requirements.
- » ALWAYS refer to the instruction manual for the car seat and the owner's manual for your vehicle to correctly install the car seat.

How do I know what seat fits my child?

- » Infant seats are used rear facing only for children up to about 20 pounds and under 2 years of age.
- » Convertible seats can be used both rear and forward facing for children who weigh up to 40 pounds.
- » Booster seats can be used if your child is at least 4 years old and weighs at least 40 pounds, or has outgrown the car seat. Booster seats should be used until children are 8 years old or 4 feet, 9 inches tall.

- » Once again, ALWAYS refer to the manufacturer's guidelines for weight and height requirements.

What are the basic guidelines for a child under one year of age?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends keeping children rear facing until they are 2 years old. Infants should ride rear facing until at least 2 years old and 20 pounds and never in front of an air bag! Harness straps should be in the slots at or below shoulder level and kept snug. You shouldn't be able to pinch the strap. The harness clip should be placed at armpit level and the seat reclined so the infants head does not flop forward.

What about kids over 2 years old and 20 pounds?

These children can ride in forward-facing car seats in the upright position. The straps should be at or above the shoulders and kept snug. You shouldn't be able to pinch the strap. Remember the harness clip should always be at the armpit level.

What about my older children?

To prevent most injuries, booster seats can be used if your child is at least 4 years old and weighs at least 40 pounds, or has outgrown the car seat. Booster seats should be used until children are 8 years old or 4 feet, 9 inches tall. The car seat is the safest place for your child. If they still fit in their car seat and have not outgrown it (refer to manufacturer's guidelines for weight and height

requirements) you do not have to move them to a booster seat. Booster seats make the lap and shoulder belts fit correctly: low over hips and upper thighs and snug over the shoulder.

How do I know when my child will correctly fit the seat belt?

They must be tall enough to sit straight with their knees bent at the edge of the seat. The lap and shoulder belt need to fit low over the hips and upper thighs and snug over the shoulder. You should NEVER put shoulder belts under the arm or behind the back! Remember, all children younger than 13 years old should ride in the back seat- it's the safest place.

5 Step Test: In a regular seat with a lap and shoulder belt on....

1. Can the child sit straight so his/her whole back is touching the seat back?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt touching the tops of the legs?
5. Can the child sit like this comfortably for the whole trip?

If you answered "NO" to ANY of these questions, you should use a booster seat with the seat belt. If you answered "YES" to ALL the questions, use a seat belt in the back seat until at least age 13.

