

Make Safe Choices When Buckling Up and Make it a Habit for Life

Children who are correctly buckled benefit from the single most effective way to protect vehicle occupants and reduce fatalities in a crash. Securing a child in an age and size appropriate car seat, belt-positioning booster seat or the vehicle seat belt is the best way to keep children safe. Correct use requires the following:

- ♦ **Selection:** Choose a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt based on the child's age, weight, height, and developmental needs.
- ♦ **Direction:** Face the car seat the right way. Children should remain rear-facing as long as possible, until they reach the top weight or height limits allowed by the manufacturer.
- ♦ **Location:** Select a forward-facing vehicle seat with seat belts that can be locked or a seating position approved for LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children) to secure the car seat. For older children, select a seating position with a seat belt that fits the child. Children younger than 13 years of age should be secured in a back seat.
- ♦ **Harness Adjustment and Fit:** Place the harness through the correct harness slots located on the back of the car seat. Buckle the harness and secure the child snugly with the harness chest clip placed at armpit level. You should NOT be able to pinch excess webbing at the shoulder or hips once the harness is buckled and snug.
- ♦ **Installation:** Read and follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions and vehicle owner's manual for guidance on correctly installing and using the car seat, booster seat, and seat belt.

Rear-Facing



Secure infants and toddlers in a rear-facing car seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

Pennsylvania law requires children younger than two years of age to always ride in a rear-facing car seat. Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat with an active passenger-side front air bag.

Traveling rear-facing is safer than forward-facing.

Forward-Facing



When children outgrow the rear-facing car seat, secure them in a forward-facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

Forward-Facing car seats reduce the risk of injury for children up to 71% compared to children using a seat belt only.

Belt-Positioning Booster



Once children outgrow the forward-facing car seat, secure them in a belt-positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt until the seat belt fits properly, typically when a child is approximately 4 feet 9 inches tall and between 8 and 12 years of age.

Booster seats lower the risk of injury for children age 4 to 8 years by 45% compared to children using the seat belt alone.

Seat Belt



When children outgrow the belt-positioning booster seat, secure them in a properly fitted lap and shoulder belt. A lap and shoulder belt fits properly when the lap belt lays low and snug across the hips/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the center of the chest and shoulder.

The lap and shoulder seat belt reduces the risk of injury by 45% - 60% in passenger cars and light trucks.

Seat Belt Safety Tips During Pregnancy

1. Always wear your seat belt. Buckling up is the single most effective action to take to protect you and your unborn child in a crash.
2. Place the shoulder belt across your chest and away from your neck.
 - ♦ Do not place the shoulder belt under your arm or behind your back.
3. Secure the lap belt **BELOW** your belly, snugly across your hips and pelvic bone.
 - ♦ **NEVER** place the lap belt over or on top of the belly.
4. Adjust the vehicle seat. Keep as much distance as possible between the belly and the steering wheel.
 - ♦ When driving, if you need additional room, consider adjusting the steering wheel or having someone else drive, if possible.
 - ♦ As a passenger, move your seat back as far as possible.
5. Keep Airbags Activated. Seat belts and air bags work together to provide the best protection for you and your unborn child.

If you are involved in a crash, seek medical attention, even if you think you are not injured, regardless if you were the driver or passenger.



Any Age, Weight or Height, Always Buckle Your Family Right

Follow best practice recommendations when selecting and securing children in the appropriate child restraint. Read the manufacturer's instructions to become familiar with the car seat and belt-positioning booster seat. The vehicle owner's manual provides guidance about the seat belt system, LATCH, and other vehicle safety features.

1. Read and Follow the car seat and vehicle owner's manuals to learn how to install and correctly use a car seat.

- ♦ Labels on car seats provide important information:
 - ♦ Basic instructions for correct installation and use
 - ♦ Name, address, and contact information of the manufacturer
 - ♦ Model Number and Manufacture Date
 - ♦ Expiration Date of the car seat

Car Seat Instructions



Vehicle Owner's Manual



2. Infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

- ♦ In Pennsylvania, always secure children younger than 2 years of age in a rear-facing car seat.
- ♦ Convertible car seats are approved for rear-facing use up to 40—50 pounds and should be considered for children who have exceeded the limits of a rear-facing only car seat.
- ♦ **Infants always ride rear-facing at no more than a 45-degree recline angle.**
 - ♦ The correct angle enables the infant to maintain an open airway.



3. Children who have outgrown a rear-facing car seat should be secured in a forward-facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

4. Harness:

- ♦ Thread the car seat harness through the correct slots:
 - ♦ At or below the shoulders for **rear-facing**.
 - ♦ At or above the shoulders for **forward-facing** in a reinforced slot.
- ♦ The car seat harness should not allow any slack. A snug harness:
 - ♦ Lies in a relatively straight line without sagging.
 - ♦ Should not be so tight as to press into a child's body.
- ♦ The chest clip is positioned at armpit level.



5. NEVER place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat of a vehicle with an active passenger-side front air bag.

- ♦ A rear-facing car seat may be used in a front seat when there is an air bag on/off switch and the switch is in the OFF position.
- ♦ To determine if air bags are present in the vehicle, check the:
 - ♦ sun visor
 - ♦ dashboard
 - ♦ vehicle owner's manual

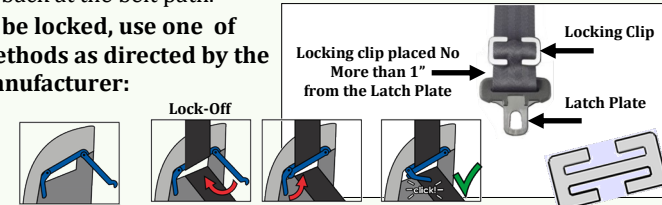


6. Children younger than 13 years of age should ride in a back seat. When a back seat is not available, correctly secured forward-facing children can ride in the front seat with an active passenger-side front air bag. Always:

- ♦ Push the vehicle seat back as far as possible, and
- ♦ Secure the child with a snug car seat harness or a properly positioned lap and shoulder seat belt following manufacturer's instructions.

7. Seat Belt: Place the vehicle seat belt through the correct belt path following the car seat manufacturer's instructions.

- ♦ **TIGHTEN and LOCK** the vehicle seat belt following instructions found in the vehicle owner's manual.
 - ♦ Check for tightness at the seat belt path.
 - ♦ The car seat should NOT move more than one-inch when pulled side-to-side or front-to-back at the belt path.
- ♦ When the seat belt cannot be locked, use one of the following approved methods as directed by the vehicle and/or car seat manufacturer:
 - ♦ Locking Clip/Lock-Off
 - ♦ Flip the Latch Plate
 - ♦ Twist the Buckle Stalk



8. LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for CHildren): Route the lower anchor connector webbing through the designated belt path following the manufacturer's instructions.

- ♦ Attach the lower anchor connectors on the car seat to the lower anchors in the vehicle following both the car seat instructions and the vehicle owner's manual.
- ♦ Check for tightness at the belt path / lower anchor.
- ♦ Attach the tether connector (if applicable) to the tether anchor and tighten.



Car seat and vehicle manufacturers provide a maximum weight limit for LATCH use.

- ♦ Use the seat belt when the lower anchor weight limit is met.
- ♦ Discontinue the use of lower anchors and the tether following the car seat and vehicle manufacturer's instructions.



9. Children who have outgrown their forward-facing car seat should be properly secured in a booster seat until the vehicle lap and shoulder belt fits correctly, at approximately 4'9" and between 8 and 12 years of age.

10. The vehicle lap and shoulder belt can be used safely when the child is able to:

- ♦ Sit with their back against the vehicle seat back without slouching.
- ♦ Bend their knees over the front edge of the vehicle seat and their feet are flat on the floor.
- ♦ Place the snug shoulder belt across the center of the chest and shoulder.
- ♦ Place the lap belt low and snug across the hips/upper thighs.
- ♦ Stay in position for the entire ride.



When in doubt, do not guess. Read the car seat instructions and vehicle owner's manual. For technical assistance, contact:

- ♦ TIPP at 1-800-CAR BELT or www.pakidstravelsafe.org
- ♦ Car Seat Manufacturer's Customer Service or visit their website