

Car Seat Safety—One Step at a Time

Car seats, belt-positioning booster seats and seat belts provide protection for infants and children.

As children grow, choose the age-and-size appropriate car seat and use it correctly every time the child is traveling in a vehicle. Children should remain in their current car seat or belt-positioning booster seat until the maximum weight or height listed by the car seat manufacturer on a label or in the instructions. Follow best practice guidelines for selecting and using the correct car seat, belt-positioning booster seat, or seat belt for your child.

Rear-Facing

Secure children in a rear-facing car seat until 2 years of age or until the maximum weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer. Children younger than 1 year should 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.

Rear-Facing Checklist:

- Child's head is at least one-inch from the top of the shell of the car seat.
- Harness straps are positioned at **or below the shoulder**.
- Harness straps lay flat and fit snugly on the child with the harness retainer clip at armpit level.
- Seat belt or lower anchors in the correct belt path are locked and tight with less than one inch of side-to-side movement when pulled at the belt path.
- Read and follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions for an acceptable rear-facing recline angle. When checking the recline angle, the vehicle must be on level ground.

Traveling rear-facing is safer than forward-facing.



Forward-Facing

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

Forward-Facing Checklist:

- Child's ears should not be above the top of the shell of the car seat.
- Harness straps are positioned at **or above the shoulder**.
- Harness straps lay flat and fit snugly on the child with the harness retainer clip at armpit level.
- Seat belt or lower anchors in the correct belt path are locked and tight with less than one inch of side-to-side movement when pulled at the belt path.
- Tether should be used following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Read and follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions to determine the appropriate upright or semi-upright angle when installing the car seat in the forward-facing position.

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



Belt-Positioning Booster-Seat

Once children outgrow their 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 and between 8 and 12 years of age.

Belt-Positioning Booster Seat Checklist:

- A belt-positioning booster seat raises the child up so the seat belt crosses the body correctly.
- The belt-positioning booster seat is **ALWAYS** used with the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt.
- Shoulder belt is snug across the center of the child's shoulder and chest.
- Lap belt is low and snug across the child's hips/upper thighs.

Note: Most children need to ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until age 10 - 12.

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 their 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. All children younger than age 13 should ride in a back seat.

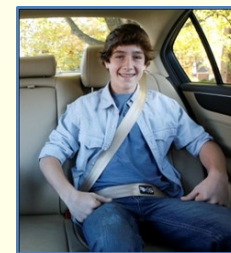
Seat Belt Checklist:

Seat belts can be used safely when the child is able to:

- Sit with their back and hips against the vehicle seat back without slouching.
- Bend their knees over the front edge of the vehicle seat.
- Keep their feet 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.

Note: The lap and shoulder belt should **ALWAYS** be used for optimal protection.

Lap and shoulder seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45%.



Manage Car Seat Inventory & Recall and Safety Notifications

Car seats are designed and tested to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213

Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 governs the performance and some design criteria for child restraint systems for children who weigh up to 80 pounds. The standard includes requirements for crashworthiness, labeling and instructions, flammability, and buckle release pressure. Although child restraint systems undergo thorough testing and evaluation, it is possible that a child restraint could be recalled.

Register All Car Seats to Receive Recall and Safety Notifications

A recall is issued when a car seat manufacturer or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) determines that a car seat creates a safety risk or fails to meet minimum safety standards. Decisions to conduct a recall and remedy a safety defect are made voluntarily by manufacturers prior to any involvement by NHTSA.



Car seats can be registered:

- Online at the car seat manufacturer's website. Complete the form providing the model number and manufacture date found on the car seat sticker.
- By Mail with registration card that came with the car seat. The registration card has the car seat's information. No postage is required to mail the card.
- Online at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-boosters-seats>. Go to Registration and select the car seat manufacturer. Complete the form and submit.

By registering your car seat, in the event of a recall, the manufacturer can contact you and guide you through the repair process.

Maintain Car Seat Inventory

Keep a record of the car seats available in your program.

Manufacturer	Evenflo	
Model Name	LiteMax 35	
Model #	3051198	
Manufacture Date	10-23-2020	
Expiration Date	10-23-2026	
Seat in Inventory	Yes	No
Date Loaned:		
Return Date:		
Loaned to:	Name, Address, Phone/Email	

- Discontinue using a car seat that has been involved in a crash or reached their expiration date.
- File a copy of the car seat instructions for each type of car seat in the program. Refer to instructions to:
 - Respond to harnessing and installation questions
 - Make copies to replace lost instructions.
- Encourage families to:
 - Read and follow the car seat instructions.
 - Register the car seat to also receive recall and safety notifications.
- Discontinue using a car seat when:
 - The child has outgrown the car seat by weight or height.
 - The car seat has been involved in a crash. The car seat should be returned to the program for a replacement car seat.
 - The car seat has reached the manufacturer's expiration date.

Cleaning Car Seats

Read the car seat manufacturer's instructions. Each manufacturer has specific instructions on how to clean their car seat. Follow the cleaning instructions provided by the manufacturer.



Wash as Directed: Use mild soap and the water temperature as directed for the car seat pad or parts. Do NOT use bleach or strong cleaners.

- **Car Seat Harness:** Many harnesses cannot be immersed in water. Manufacturers recommend wiping the harness with mild soap and water and allowing the harness to air dry.
- **Car Seat Shell:** Clean with mild soap and water and dry with a soft cloth. Take care not to damage the labels.
- **Never** use an iron or heat on the car seat pads or harnesses. The heat can damage the fibers.

Evaluate the Buckle: Check the crotch buckle and clean as needed to ensure proper latching. Make sure the buckle is functioning properly and is free of debris.

Reassemble the Car Seat Correctly: Carefully follow the car seat instructions to reassemble the car seat correctly. Take pictures of the car seat parts and harness assembly before taking the car seat apart. The pictures will serve as a guide as you reassemble the car seat.

Car Seat Expiration Dates

Car seat expiration dates are determined by the manufacturer and indicate the life span of the car seat.

Manufactured in / Fabriqué en (year-month-day)/année-mois-jour 2020-10-23
Name / Nom LITEMAX 35 FACTORY SELECT
Model / Modèle 3051198
Made in / Fabriqué au China
Expires on / Expire le 2026-10-23
Serial Number 3051198GBP001479

Expiration dates are a way for car seat manufacturers to provide guidance on the expected "useful" life of their car seat.

- The car seat expiration date is based on the date of manufacture, not the date of purchase or use.
- Discontinue use of the car seat once the expiration date is reached.
- The date of manufacture can be found on the label that provides the model number. The sticker may be found on the back, side, or bottom of the car seat.
- The expiration date may be provided as a month and year or in number of years from the date of manufacture.

Replacement Parts: An inventory of older car seat parts. These parts may not be available beyond the expiration date.

Car Seat Involved in a Crash: Always follow the car seat manufacturer's guidance about replacing a car seat involved in a crash. Some car seat manufacturers:

- Recommend a car seat be replaced after a crash of any severity, even a minor crash.
- Follow the NHTSA recommendations that car seats be replaced following a moderate or severe crash.