

Gift Giving Guide for Car Seats

Selecting The Right Seat



The Best Car Seat is the one that fits the child, fits the vehicle, and the caregiver can use correctly every time.



Rear-Facing Car Seat: Secure infants and toddlers in a rear-facing car seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

A rear-facing car seat supports the head, neck and spine, and cradles and moves with the child in a crash. Select a car seat that accommodates the child's weight and height. Assure the child's head is at least one-inch (1") below the top of the back of the car seat. Thread the harness through the slots located **at or below** the child's shoulder. Children younger than 2 years of age who outgrow the rear-facing only car seat should move to a rear-facing convertible or all-in-one car seat.

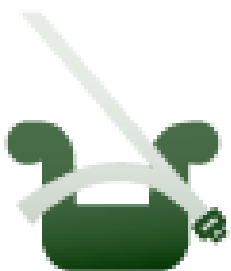
- **Infant Car Seat (Rear-Facing only):** Portable rear-facing car seat designed for newborns and small children.
 - The weight range is from 3 - 4 pounds and goes up to 30 - 35 pounds.
- **Convertible or All-in-One Car Seat:** Larger car seats that can be used rear-facing to a higher weight, and then convert to a forward-facing car seat. The All-in-One also converts into a booster seat.
 - The rear-facing weight range is from 4 - 5 pounds and goes up to 40 - 50 pounds.



Forward-Facing Car Seat: 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.

A forward-facing car seat with a correctly positioned snug harness will keep the child in the car seat. Thread the harness through the slots located **at or above** the child's shoulder. Use the tether when installing forward-facing car seats, whenever possible.

- **Convertible or Combination or All-in-One Car Seats:** Forward-facing car seats with a harness.
 - The forward-facing weight range is from 20 - 30 pounds and goes up to 40 - 65 pounds.



Booster Seats: When 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 correctly, typically when a child is approximately 4 feet 9 inches (4'9") tall and between 8 and 12 years of age.

A belt-positioning booster seat is designed to be used with the vehicle lap and shoulder belt. The booster seat raises and positions the child so the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt fits correctly. Place the lap and shoulder seat belt through the correct belt path. Positioning the lap belt low and snug across the child's hips, touching the upper thighs. The shoulder belt should be across the child's chest and shoulder.

- **High-back Booster Seat:** Provides head, neck, and back support. Some high-back booster seats convert to a backless booster seat.
- **Backless Booster Seat:** A backless booster seat does not provide head and neck support. Use in vehicles that have head restraints.
- **Combination or All-in-One Car Seat:** Remove the harness and use in the belt-positioning mode with a lap and shoulder belt to secure the child.
 - Booster seat weight range is from 40 pounds and goes up to 100 - 120 pounds.

Guide for Car Seat Accessories

There are many products sold as car seat accessories. Non-approved products are not recommended by car seat manufacturers. These non-approved products are often added for the comfort or positioning of the child. Using products that make even minor child fit adjustments could change how the car seat will perform in a crash, increasing the potential for serious injury or death. Other car seat accessories are available for warmth or as an activity to entertain the child. Using any product that was not approved by the car seat manufacturer or one that did not come with the car seat may affect the child's safety during a crash and should not be used.

Car seats must meet the crash performance standards specified in Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 (FMVSS 213). Car seat accessories or other items that are added to a car seat are considered non-approved because there is no way to know how they will change how a car seat performs and protects during a crash. Accessories that come with the car seat, such as head and body supports or harness covers, are safe to use. Always read and follow the car seat manufacturer instructions to correctly use these items.

What are non-approved car seat products?

Non-approved car seat products, sometimes called non-regulated or "aftermarket", are accessories that did not come with the car seat or from the car seat manufacturer and are marketed and purchased separately.

Always follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions when considering use of non-approved products, such as:

- inserts,
- canopy covers,
- toys, and
- vehicle seat protectors.

Non-approved products that may effect harness adjustment and fit include:

- harness covers,
- infant supports or inserts,
- bunting bags, and
- warming accessories.

Only products approved by the car seat manufacturer for use with a particular car seat or booster seat model are acceptable to use. Check both the car seat instruction manual and the manufacturer's website for information on use of these products.

If you have any questions, contact the car seat manufacturer or a Child Passenger Safety Technician for help.



Head pillows and infant support items:

Follow car seat manufacturer's instructions to safely use these items. Some car seat manufacturers may sell additional products to be used with some or all of their car seats. Always check with the manufacturer of your car seat before using any additional products.

NOTE: Some inserts provided with the car seat have weight limits. Remove inserts as directed in the car seat instructions.

Shoulder harness covers: Use the harness covers provided with the car seat. Adding shoulder harness covers may interfere with snugly tightening the harness and correct placement of the harness retainer clip.

NOTE: A loose harness increases the forward movement of the child in a crash, increasing the risk of injury. Always follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions to secure the child with a snug harness for maximum protection.

Mats and Vehicle Seat Covers: Numerous products are offered to protect the vehicle seat when using a car seat. Some car seat manufacturers allow the use of a towel or thin blanket, their seat protector product or a other specified options.

NOTE: Check with the car seat manufacturer for recommendations to protect vehicle seats when using their car seat.

Balancing Warmth and Safety

- ♦ Warm the vehicle up in advance of taking the child outside, if possible.
- ♦ Secure the child with a snug harness. Make sure the harness retainer clip is at armpit level.
- ♦ Cover the child with a blanket over the top of the harness straps or turn the coat around and put it on backwards.

NOTE: Use of aftermarket covers, essentially fitted blankets, designed to give additional warmth may be an option if allowed by the car seat manufacturer. Only use covers approved by the car seat manufacturer for the specific car seat being used. Read and follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions to safely use the cover.

Toys and mirrors: While parents might find these products useful to keep a baby from fussing, they can become a serious risk in the event of a crash. A mirror could break or come loose during a crash and injure the child. Toys hanging from the car seat can hurt the child if contact is made during a crash.

NOTE: If you feel these items are necessary, only select items that are made of soft materials.



Insert sold separately
CHECK for Use



Insert came with car seat
CORRECT Use



NOT Recommended for Use