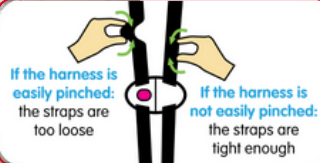


# Safely Secure a Child in Their Car Seat

## Secure Children in the Back Seat Until 13 Years of Age



### Rear-Facing Car Seats



- The harness straps are threaded through the slots that are **at or below** the child's shoulders.
- The buckle webbing is threaded through the slot that is closest to the child's body.
- The harness is snug and the chest clip is at armpit level.



Check for the correct belt path and angle.

- Place the car seat on the vehicle seat at the correct angle.
- Thread the the seat belt or lower anchor webbing through the correct belt path and tighten.

### Forward-Facing Car Seats



- The harness straps are threaded through the slots that are **at or above** the child's shoulders.
- The buckle webbing is threaded through the slot that is closest to the child's body.
- The harness is snug and the chest clip is at armpit level.



Check for the correct belt path.

- Thread the the seat belt or lower anchor webbing through the correct belt path and tighten.

- Always use the tether on forward-facing car seats.
- Attach the tether to the vehicle's tether anchor and pull tight.
- Read the vehicle owner's manual to locate the tether anchors.



### Booster Seats



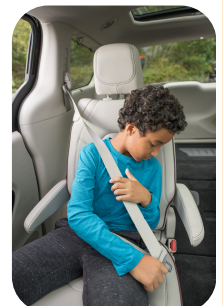
- Position the height of the booster seat or vehicle seat head restraint behind the child's head to provide support.
- Position shoulder belt across the center of the chest and shoulder.
  - Use the shoulder belt guide for correct placement of the shoulder belt.
- Position the lap belt low and snug across the child's hips.
- Make sure the seat belt fits securely over the child's hips and shoulder.
- Follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions for correct seat belt routing.



### Seat Belts



- A child is ready for a seat belt when the child can:
  - Keep their back against the vehicle seat.
  - Bend their knees over the front edge of the seat without slouching, and
  - Place their feet flat on the floor.
- Position the height of the vehicle seat head restraint behind the child's head to provide support.
- The lap and shoulder belt fits when:
  - The lap belt lays low and snug across the hips, touching the upper thighs.
  - The shoulder belt crosses the center of the chest and shoulder.
  - The child can stay comfortably seated with the lap and shoulder belt correctly positioned for the entire trip.



# WHEN TO CHANGE OR REPLACE YOUR CHILD'S CAR SEAT

## 5 Key Signs It Is Time for a Different Car Seat or Booster Seat

### The Child Does Not Fit in the Car Seat or Booster Seat

- Select a car seat based on the child's height, weight, age, and developmental needs.
- Always check the car seat label to determine the allowable weight and height range for the car seat or booster seat.
  - Move a child that is too small or too large for the car seat to a car seat that is appropriate for the child's size.



### The Car Seat is Expired

- **Expiration Date:** Car seat manufacturers determine the life span of their car seat and provide the expiration date in their instructions or on a car seat label.
- Reasons for expiration dates may include the following:
  - Wear and Tear: Over time, the plastic shell and other parts can breakdown or weaken, especially from heat, cold, and daily use.
  - Updated Safety Standards and Labeling Requirements: Older car seats may not meet the latest safety standards.



### The Car Seat is Damaged

#### Signs Your Car Seat May Be Damaged and Unsafe:

- Missing Instructions or Labels
- Missing or Damaged Parts:
  - Cracks, warping, or stress marks in the plastic shell
  - Torn, frayed, or weakened harness straps
  - Missing or broken parts
    - Buckles, chest clips, padding
  - Loose or worn harness adjusters
- If any of these signs are present, it is time to move to a car seat that is in good condition and safe to use.

### The Car Seat was Involved in a Crash

- **Always follow the car seat manufacturer's instruction for replacing a seat after a crash.**
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), states a car seat should be replaced after any moderate or severe crash, because the integrity of the seat may be compromised.
- However, you may not need to replace the car seat after a minor crash, if all of the following are true:
  1. The vehicle could be driven away from the crash site.
  2. The vehicle door nearest the car seat was not damaged.
  3. No one in the vehicle was injured.
  4. The airbags did not deploy.
  5. There is no visible damage to the car seat.



If any one of these conditions is not met, the car seat must be replaced.



### The Car Seat has Been Recalled



**Check for Recalls.** Locate the following information on the car seat or booster seat:

- **Manufacturer Name:** Identifies the brand for reference and gives an "800" phone number.
- **Model Number:** Often found on a label on the back or bottom of the car seat or booster seat.
- **Date of Manufacture:** Indicates the production date, which helps determine the car seat's expiration and recall status.

**Check your seat for recalls using the following resources:**

Use NHTSA's recall lookup tool to search for recalls by entering your car seat's model number and date of manufacture.



Download the SaferCar app for mobile access to recall information



<https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/safercar-app>

**Check Car Seat Manufacturer Websites**

Manufacturers post recall notices and guidance on their websites.



***ALWAYS repair a recalled car seat or booster seat following the car seat manufacturer's instructions. If a car seat or booster seat cannot be repaired, it must be replaced.***