

Car Seats:

Am I using the right one?



REAR FACING

Keep kids rear-facing as long as possible.

- Kids should ride rear-facing as long as possible, at least until age 2.
- Rear-facing convertible car seats can be used for both infants and toddlers.
- Rear-facing car seats should never be used in front of an airbag.
- Check the car seat labels for height and weight requirements.

Why should kids stay rear-facing?

- Young kids are safer when rear-facing.
- Rear-facing car seats protect your child's neck and spine.



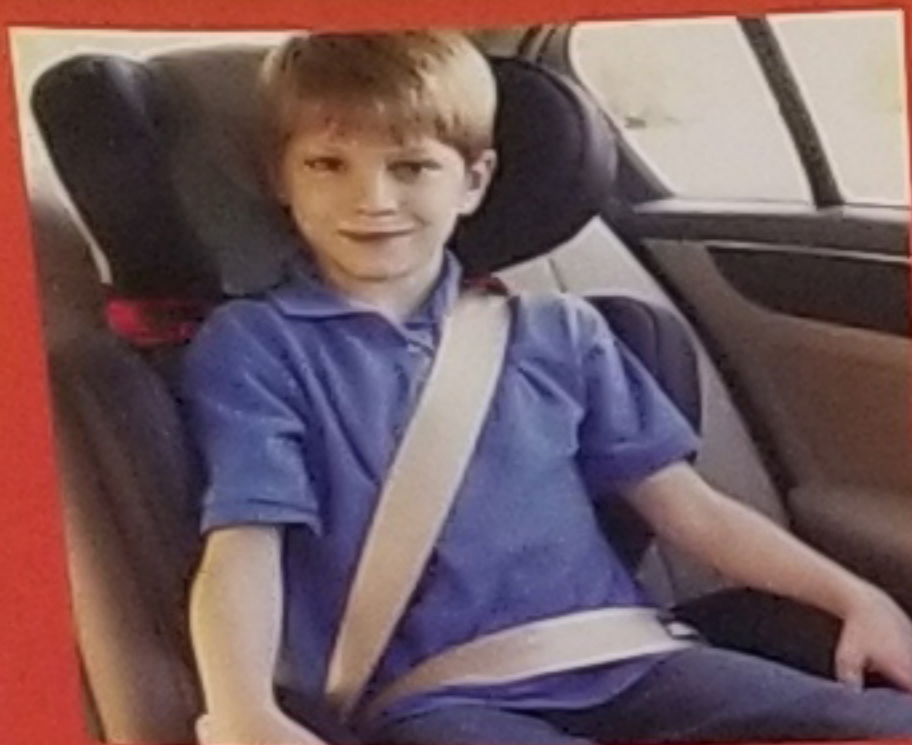
FORWARD FACING

Use forward-facing car seats with harnesses for as long as possible.

- When kids reach the upper rear-facing limits, they should switch to a forward-facing car seat with a harness.
- Don't switch to forward-facing too soon.
- Be sure to use the top tether.
- Check the car seat labels for age, height, and weight requirements.

Why should kids use a harnessed seat?

- The car seat harness keeps kids in the safest position.
- The harness spreads crash forces out over the strongest part of the body.
- The top tether keeps the car seat from moving too far forward in a crash.



BOOSTER SEAT

Use booster seats until the seat belt fits on its own.

- Kids should ride in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until they are big enough AND mature enough to ride in a booster seat.
- Many kids need booster seats well past the age of 8.
- Check the booster seat labels for height, weight, and age requirements.

Why is a booster seat important?

- Seat belts are designed to fit adults. Booster seats position kids so the seat belt fits properly – lap belt low on hips and shoulder belt across the collarbone.
- Kids can be seriously injured if the lap belt is too high on the stomach.
- If the shoulder belt is under the arm or behind the back it can't do its job.



SEAT BELT

Older children should use seat belts all the time.

- Kids should stay in a booster seat until the seat belt fits properly on its own.
- A seat belt fits properly when the lap belt sits low on the hips (not the stomach) and the shoulder belt crosses over the collarbone.
- Kids should ride in the back seat until they are 13 years old.

Why are seat belts important?

- Seat belts spread crash forces over the strongest parts of the body.
- In a crash, a seat belt will keep you in your seat.
- If the shoulder belt is under the arm or behind the back it can't do its job.



SAFE KIDS
NORTH CAROLINA

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