

Child Seat Safety Tips

<https://americanspcc.org/car-seat-safety/>

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in children in the U.S, and result in injury to over 120,000 children each year. Proper use of car seats can decrease the risk of death and injury by as much as 70% when safety seats are used correctly.

Car Seat Safety: Nearly half of all car seats are used or installed correctly, which puts children in danger of injury or death. Use of car seats and safety restraints can reduce the risks children face by 50 to 70% when employed properly. In addition, child restraint laws are present in every state and include the use of safety seats for infants and younger children, as well as requirements for older children. Keeping children safe should be a priority of parents and caregivers at all times but particularly when traveling by car. In addition, a properly fitted and installed car seat is often more comfortable for children and will result in a more pleasant trip.

Car Seat Safety Statistics: In children under 12 years of age, motor vehicle crashes accounted for 663 deaths in 2015 and 121,350 injuries in 2014 an estimated 618,000 children under 14 ride in an automobile without a safety seat or restraint system at least some of the time each year. Properly used, car safety seats can reduce the chance for death by 70% in infants under 1 year, and 54% in toddlers aged 1 to 4 years. Booster seat use can reduce the chance for serious injury by 45% in children aged 4 to 8 years. Seat belt use reduces the chance for death by up to 50% in older children and adults. An estimated 59% of car seats and 20% of booster seats are installed or used improperly. About 40% of the children riding with adults who are not using their seat belt are also unrestrained. Restraining children in rear seats rather than front seats can reduce the risk of death by 75% for children under 4, and by 50% for children aged 4 to 8 child deaths by auto accident have been decreasing since the mid-1970s. Improved car seat technology, seat belt laws and a greater understanding of the real need for car restraints have helped to reduce fatalities but car crashes still account for more than 1 in 4 deaths in children.

Car Safety Tips: Adults – Buckle up! Children also benefit when adults buckle up. Children are less likely to object to safety restraints when adults use seat belts routinely. All passengers in any vehicle should use the appropriate seat belt or safety restraint, every time with every ride, no matter how short the trip is. It should be an automatic habit to buckle up. **Use Safety Restraints.** Children should be placed only in an approved safety restraint designed for their age and size. Infant seats for infants, car seats for small children, booster seats for larger children and seat belts for big kids and adults. **Kids in the Back Seat.** Children under 12 years of age should sit in the back seat of a passenger car. Safety features in the front seat, such as airbags are designed for adults and can harm or even kill a young child. If a child must be placed in the front seat, airbags may be disabled according to manufacturer's instructions.

Small Children in the Middle. The middle of the back seat is the safest place to seat a child. A car seat should be installed in the middle when possible. Behind the driver's seat is the second-best location for a child or infant seat.

Rear Facing for Infants: Infants should only be placed in rear-facing car seats for at least the first 12 months, preferably longer. Some states require children to remain in rear-facing seats for the first two years and may also require the child to be of a certain weight before aging into a front-facing seat.

Airbags: have improved car crash safety for adults but can be deadly for children. Children should not ride in the front seat with an airbag and car seats should not be installed in the front seat, particularly if rear-facing. Check manufacturer's instructions for airbag disabling or other safety measures.

Installation: Other than failure to use a car seat, the most common problem in car seat safety is improper installation. Newer cars are designed with attachment points that work with current car seats.

Manufacturer instructions of both the car and the safety seat should be examined before installing. In many areas, hospitals or law enforcement groups have "car seat safety" checks where parents can have experts ensure that safety seats are installed properly.

Distracted Driving In addition to protection in an accident, keeping children restrained in safety seats help to prevent driver distraction. When children are old enough, adults should discuss car safety and help the child understand the dangers of distracted driving.

Car Seat Types: The number one safety tip of car seats is "Use them". An infant or child should be placed in a safety seat that is appropriate for age and size. Though car seats for infants and toddlers are thought to be the "safest", once the child is too big, it will not provide adequate protection. A car seat that is too small will also be uncomfortable and a child will resist sitting in it.

Car seat manufacturers recommend both age ranges and height-weight ranges as some children may be larger or smaller than average. Regulations vary from state-to-state but also include both age and size requirements. An appropriate car seat should fit securely and comfortably.

Using a car seat: Safety seats do not work if they are not used properly. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Centers for Disease Control have said that nearly half of all car seats are used incorrectly. Use only approved seats.

Between Families Newsletter
Child Seat Safety Tips
Please complete the following questionnaire
.5h credit

True/False:

1. **True or False:** Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in children in the U.S.

2. **True or False:** Booster seats should be used until the car's seat belt fits the child properly.

3. **True or False:** Nearly all car seats are installed correctly by parents and caregivers.

Multiple Choice:

4. **When is it safe for a child to begin using a forward-facing car seat?**
 - A. 6 months
 - B. 1 year
 - C. 2 years
 - D. 4 years

5. **How much can proper use of a car safety seat reduce the risk of death in infants under 1 year?**
 - A. 30%
 - B. 45%
 - C. 54%
 - D. 70%

6. **Which of the following is NOT a recommended car safety tip from the article?**
 - A. Always buckle up, even for short trips
 - B. Place children in the front seat with an airbag
 - C. Use safety restraints appropriate for the child's age and size

D. Teach children about car safety and distracted driving

Fill in the Blank:

5. An estimated _____ of car seats and 20% of booster seats are installed or used improperly.

Answer: 59%

8. Children under age 12 should always ride in the _____ seat for maximum safety.

Answer Key

True/False:

1. True or False: Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in children in the U.S.

Answer: True

2. True or False: Booster seats should be used until the car's seat belt fits the child properly.

Answer: True

3. True or False: Nearly all car seats are installed correctly by parents and caregivers.

Answer: False

Multiple Choice:

4. When is it safe for a child to begin using a forward-facing car seat?

A. 6 months

B. 1 year

C. 2 years

D. 4 years

Answer: C. 2 years

5. How much can proper use of a car safety seat reduce the risk of death in infants under 1 year?

A. 30%

B. 45%

C. 54%

D. 70%

Answer: D. 70%

6. Which of the following is NOT a recommended car safety tip from the article?

A. Always buckle up, even for short trips

B. Place children in the front seat with an airbag

C. Use safety restraints appropriate for the child's age and size

D. Teach children about car safety and distracted driving

Answer: B. Place children in the front seat with an airbag

Fill in the Blank:

7. An estimated ____ of car seats and 20% of booster seats are installed or used improperly.

Answer: 59%

8. Children under age 12 should always ride in the _____ seat for maximum safety.

Answer: back