



The Perfect Gift

■ How can I tell if my child's seat is a "safe" one?

Every safety seat made for sale in the U.S. must be crash-tested and labeled with the name of the manufacturer, the date made, and a statement that the seat complies with federal safety standards. After purchasing a new seat, return the registration card for notification if the product is recalled or needs replacement parts in the future. Finally, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

■ What is the law?

Laws in every state require newborn babies and young children to be buckled up in car safety seats. Safety belt laws for older children and adults cover most of the U.S. population. Local or state officials can provide further details.

■ The "best" car seat . . .

Fits your child.

Some seats fit only infants, while "convertibles" may be adjusted to fit from birth to age four. Safety boosters are for children who have outgrown regular safety seats.

Four Rules for Auto Safety

1. Choose a safety seat that fits your child
2. Check that it fits tightly in the car
3. Follow instructions exactly
4. Buckle up children in the back seat

For Infants

(Birth to 12 months)

Passenger-side air bags can cause fatal injuries to infants!

Type of Seat



infant safety seat
(rear-facing only)



convertible seat
(rear-facing for first year)

How to Use

- Face backward in car first year or longer
- Adjust seat to 45° (halfway back)
- Use strap slots below shoulders
- Harness baby snugly before putting on blanket
- Secure vehicle safety belt tightly per instructions

Don't Make These Mistakes

- Facing infant forward
- Placing infant in front seat with passenger-side air bag
- Using household carrier in car

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT CAR SAFETY SEATS

Fits your car(s).

Try before you buy! Secure the seat with the safety belt exactly as shown in the instructions. After making the belt as tight as possible, check that the safety seat stays in place while you try to tip it toward the front of the car and sideways. If the seat moves more than an inch, use another seating position. If that doesn't work, you will need to get a special part from either the car dealer or the safety seat company. Examples: locking clip, heavy-duty locking clip, top tether strap, "attaching" lap belt, child seat buckle. Call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. for details.

Children should ride in the back seat, if possible, since it is the safest part of the car. Children in the front seat could be injured by a passenger-side air bag, even in a low-speed crash, especially if they are leaning forward or not wearing a snug shoulder harness. Several rear-facing infants have been killed by the explosive force of a partially inflated air bag slamming into the back of the safety seat at 200 mph.

Fits your needs.

Choose a seat that is easy to install in your car(s) and use correctly. The "best" safety seat for your family is the one you and your child will be comfortable using on every ride.

■ How can I keep my child in the car seat?

- Start a lifelong habit with baby's first ride.
- Strengthen the habit by never making an exception.
- Encourage good passengers with praise, singing, games.
- Have special soft toys and books for the car.
- Make regular stops to stretch.
- Introduce your child to a new seat with a short trip for fun.
- Always wear your own safety belt.

■ Where can I get a car seat?

You can buy a new car seat at most discount, catalog, baby, and department stores and at some auto-related businesses. Convertible seats, for children from birth to about 40 pounds, cost \$45 and up. Many hospitals and public health departments have car seat loan or low-cost purchase programs. Be very cautious about purchasing or borrowing a used car seat.

■ If you get a used car seat from someone you trust, make sure . . .

- it was never used in a crash
- it has complete identification stickers, including date made
- it is less than 10 years old, preferably less than five
- it has all of its parts, including instruction booklet
- you have checked the most recent recall list

HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE CAR SAFETY SEATS

For Toddlers and Young Children

(12 months and over)



convertible seat



child seat/booster



harness or
built-in safety seat

- Child may face forward after 12 months and 20 lbs.
- Child sits upright
- For convertible seats, move straps to top slots
- Fasten harness and/or shield system snugly
- Test for tightness - try to pull forward, sideways

For Older Children

(Children who have outgrown safety seats with a harness)



booster with shield
(for lap-only belts)



booster with shoulder/lap
belt (preferred)



vehicle safety belt
(fits after age 6-10)

- Provide one safety belt per person
- Use shoulder belt if possible, but never under the arm
- Use booster without shield to position shoulder/lap belt
- If only lap belt is available, keep it low and snug . . .
- Or use shield booster to position lap belt

A passenger-side air bag can injure children in the front seat.

- Placing straps on or under arms
- Failing to keep harness snug
- Attaching safety belt loosely or in wrong place

- Making an exception "just this once"
- Putting two people in one belt
- Carrying heavy objects loose in the car

Car crashes are the #1 preventable cause of death of children and young adults . . .

as well as a major cause of permanent brain damage, epilepsy, and spinal cord injuries. A sudden stop at 30 miles per hour could cause the same crushing force on your child's brain and body as a fall from a 3-story building. Fortunately, by buckling up children, we can prevent most of these deaths and serious injuries.

"In late August last year our car was clipped by a truck, causing us to go out of control. Our car rolled 3 times, and then slid down the highway on its top. Our little daughter was in the back seat, buckled up in her car safety seat. After awakening from a daze, I was afraid to turn around for fear of what I would see. Suddenly, I heard a very familiar joy. I turned slowly to find my precious daughter, hanging upside-down . . . still secure in her safety seat . . . laughing from all the 'excitement' of the ride. I just cannot express the joy that laugh brought.

Thanks to her safety seat, our daughter is now over a year old and growing and playing just as any other child. My wife and I feel her car safety seat was the best investment we have ever made."

Adapted from a letter by
Brian and Cheryl Kolakowski
Stockton, California



SHOPPING GUIDE

INFANT SAFETY SEATS (Birth to 20/22 lbs.: must be used rear-facing)

•Carrier with detachable base

4-in-1, Affinity 590, Deluxe Amiva/Turnabout, Infant Rider/Travel About, On My Way, Plus 4/Plus 5, Safe Journey, SmartFit, Travel Tandem

•Carrier Only

Amiva/Turnabout, Assura 565, Century # 530/560, Guard with Glide, Infant Rider, Joy Ride, Rock 'n Ride, SecureRide, T.L.C

CONVERTIBLE SAFETY SEATS (Adjust to use rear-facing or forward-facing)

•5-point harness (may be adjusted to fit newborns)

Auto-Mate, Baby-Sitter, Century #1000/1500, Guardian Comfort/Folder, Medallion, Ovation, Pro-Tech, Scout, Sit 'n' Stroll (fits rear-facing to 25 lbs.), Soelcast (fits spica cast), SmartMove, Touriva/Regal Ride, Trooper, Ultra V

•Harness with pad/T-shield (not recommended for newborns)

Century #2000/2500, Guardian Comfort/Folder, Ovation, Scout, Touriva/Regal Ride

•Harness with tray-shield (not recommended for newborns)

Century #3000/3500, #5000/5500, Champion, Guard One-Click, Guardian Comfort/Folder, Olympian, Ovation Performa, SmartMove, Touriva/Regal Ride, Trooper, Ultra I

CHILD SEAT (Forward-facing only; not for infants under one year)

Freeway (20-40 lbs.)

CHILD SEAT/BOOSTERS (Use harness as long as possible; then shoulder/lap belt)

Breverra Premiere (30-60 lbs.), Breverra Contour (30-40 lbs.),

Evolution (22-60 lbs.), Two-in-One (22-55 lbs.)

SAFETY BOOSTER SEATS (Not recommended if safety seat with harness fits child)

•Removable shield booster (use shield if only lap belt is available)

Certified to 40 lbs. with shield: Double Guard, Double Guard Sport, Grand Explorer/Adventurer

Certified to 60 lbs. with shield: Sidekick

•Belt-positioning boosters (use only with shoulder/lap belt; weight limits vary)

With high back: Breverra Sport, BeltRight, Cruiser, Galaxy 2000,

Guardian Double Up, Kangaroo, Komfort Rider, Starrise/Comfy,

Volvo Booster Cushion/Backrest No backrest: RightFit

OTHER RESTRAINT SYSTEMS

•Infant safety seat/side-facing car bed

Ultra Dream Ride, Dream Ride Plus

•Harnesses E-2-On Vest (Sizes for age 2 to adult; top tether required;

recommended for child under 4, over 40 lbs., and only lap belt available)

Little Cargo Auto Safety Vest (25-49 lbs., no top tether)

•Seats for larger children

Carrie Seat, Columbia #2000, Gorilla

•Integrated child seats

Safety seats may be ordered as vehicle options (not for infants)

Call SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. for information about car seat recalls, appropriate child restraints for air travel, products for challenged children, locking clips, and ideas for programs.

For more information:

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