

Child Passenger Safety

TALKING POINTS

Join the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to educate parents and caregivers on child passenger safety including car seats, booster seats, and seat belts.

Overview

- Car crashes are a leading cause of death for children.
- Studies have shown that parents can be overconfident in their ability to select and install the right seats for their children; in fact, approximately half of all car seats are not correctly installed.
- NHTSA urges parents and caregivers to double-check and make sure their children are in the right seats (rear-facing car seats, forward-facing car seats, or booster seats) and that the seats are installed correctly. "Good enough" may not be good enough in a crash.

Stats

- {Insert latest national statistics from NHTSA, available at <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/safety-topics/child-safety/car-seats-boosters-seat-belts#4196>}
- {Insert your local/state statistics. NHTSA also has state statistics in its latest Children Traffic Safety Facts, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/#!/PublicationList/33>.}

Important car seat tips

- *Read the instructions.* Before installing a car seat, read both the car seat instruction manual and the vehicle owner's manual. These documents contain critical information about correct car seat installation in your vehicle. Skipping steps or misusing equipment can have serious consequences. To get expert help installing your car seat, a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician can help you for free.
- *Use the tether on forward-facing car seats.* Securing the tether is an essential step when installing a forward-facing car seat. It prevents the car seat from moving forward in a crash and may prevent head injury. Read your vehicle owner's manual to find the correct tether anchor location.
- *Don't rush to the next seat.* Moving children to the next type of car seat before they're ready leaves them vulnerable in a crash. Keep your kids in the right seat as long as possible for their age and size.
- *Keep children under 13 in the back seat.* Riding in the front seat is not safe for kids. Air bags in the front seat are designed for adult passengers. All children under 13 should be buckled in the correct seat – always in the back seat. Never place a car seat in the front seat.

- *Register car seats with the manufacturer.* That way, in the event of a safety recall, the manufacturer will be able to notify the caregiver. NHTSA's [SaferCar app](#) provides an easy way for parents and caregivers to save their vehicle and car seat details. The app will send the user a notification if any of their saved vehicles or car seats are included in a recall.

The importance of booster seats

- Just like infant car seats are essential for babies, car seats and booster seats are equally necessary next steps.
- Booster seats are a necessary step between car seats and seat belts. Booster seats position the adult seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body to protect them in a crash.
- If a booster seat is the right seat for a child's age and size, then that is the safest way for them to be protected in a crash. Children should stay in a booster seat until a seat belt fits correctly.

Seat belts for big kids

- When a child is ready to use a seat belt, check to make sure the seat belt lies across the child's upper thighs and is snug across the shoulder and chest. Seat belts should never rest on the stomach area or across the face or neck.
- Be sure children do not place the shoulder strap behind their back. In a crash, a child could be seriously injured if the shoulder belt isn't in the correct place. When driving with children, caregivers should check periodically to make sure they're still buckled correctly.

State laws

- Every state, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. territories have laws requiring children to be secured in the appropriate car seats or booster seats for their ages and sizes while riding in cars.
- Some states require children to ride in appropriate car seats or booster seats up to age 9. See the laws for your state on the [GHSA website](#).

Child Passenger Safety Week

- While child passenger safety is important year-round, Child Passenger Safety Week in September is a good time to increase communication related to child passenger safety messaging.

Seat Check Saturday

- On National Seat Check Saturday, which coincides with Child Passenger Safety Week, many locations throughout the country will be offering free car seat inspections by certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians. Find out if an event or technician is available in your community by visiting www.nhtsa.gov/CarSeatInspection.

Free resources

Commented [A1]: For this year's week, visit <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/safety-topics/child-safety/car-seats-boosters-seat-belts>

Commented [A2]: For this year's date, visit <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/safety-topics/child-safety/car-seats-boosters-seat-belts>

NHTSA provides helpful resources online to make child passenger safety easier for parents and caregivers. Visit www.nhtsa.gov/CarSeat for everything you need to know about car seats.

- [Car Seat Types](#): Determine whether your child fits best in a rear-facing car seat, forward-facing car seat, booster seat, or seat belt.
- [Car Seat Recommendations](#): Review NHTSA's recommendations for the right car seat for your child's age and size.
- [Find and Compare](#): Find and compare car seats with NHTSA's handy car seat finder, which also searches specific brands.
- [Ease-of-Use Evaluation](#): This tool lets you compare how easy it is to use certain car seat features so you can make informed decisions about the right car seat. [You can also search by brand](#).
- [Car Seat Inspection Station](#): Certified technicians will inspect your car seat free of charge, and show you how to correctly install and use it. Some locations also offer virtual inspections.