



CHILD'S CAR SEAT

Car seats are the best way to protect your child. They prevent serious injuries, even death. Maryland law requires that all children under age 8 be in a car seat or booster seat while riding in a vehicle, unless the child is taller than 4'9" or over 65 pounds.

Protect your child by using these guidelines.

Selecting a car seat for your child

- ☐ Choose a car seat that fits your child's age, weight and height.
- ☐ To reduce cost, consider purchasing a convertible car seat that can be used from infancy through preschool. Or, consider borrowing a car seat from a loaner program.
- ☐ Do not use a car seat if it is more than 6 years old, has been in a crash or the history of the seat is unknown.

Installing your car seat

- ☐ Always follow the car seat and vehicle manuals to install the seat.
- ☐ The backseat is safest.
- ☐ Install the car seat by using the vehicle's safety belts or LATCH device.
- ☐ Install the car seat tightly. It should not move more than one inch from side to side or towards the front of the car when you pull on the seat where it attaches to the car.

**BE A SMART PARENT.
BUCKLE UP YOUR CHILD.**

USING YOUR CHILD'S CAR SEAT

Installing your car seat (continued)

- ☐ Keep your car seat rear-facing until your child reaches 30-45 pounds (check the car seat labels) and up to 24 months.
- ☐ When your child is ready to face forward, review your car seat manual and make necessary adjustments to the car seat.
- ☐ Use the forward-facing harness as long as possible (40-90 pounds). Check labels.
- ☐ Use the tether strap on the back of the car seat for forward-facing seats. Check your car manual for the location of the tether hook.
- ☐ Only use products that come with your child's car seat.
- ☐ Never leave a child alone in a car seat or vehicle.

Using the harness straps

- ☐ Use the correct opening for the straps. Use the opening at or below your baby's shoulder in rear-facing seats. Use the opening at or above your child's shoulder in forward-facing seats. As your child grows, move the straps to higher openings.
- ☐ The straps should be snug and flat on the child.
- ☐ The harness clip should be at the level of the child's armpits.

Studies show that when children are correctly buckled up, they are better behaved, feel more secure, fall asleep sooner and are less likely to be injured.

For information about car seat inspections or loaner programs, call Maryland Kids In Safety Seats at 1-800-370-7328 or visit www.mdkiss.org.



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