

District Child Passenger Safety



4 Steps For Kids

Babies under the age of 2 yrs. old and 40 lbs – Rear-facing car seats



REAR-FACING



CONVERTIBLE

A rear-facing car seat is the **best** seat for your baby to use. It has a harness and in a crash, cradles, and moves with your child to reduce the stress to your child's fragile neck and spinal cord. The following should be checked:

- Harness straps should be snug at or below baby's shoulders.
- Chest clip should be at the center of baby's chest, level with armpits.
- Remove baby's bulky coat or bunting before strapping in.

Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have a higher height and weight limits for rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time.

Toddlers and big kids – Forward-facing car seats



FORWARD-FACING
CAR SEAT

The best way to keep your child safe is in the **rear-facing** position. Your child should be kept in that position as long as possible or until your child had reach the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat's manufacturer.

Your next seat will be the forward-facing seat. It has a harness and a tether that limits your child's forward movement during a crash. The following should be checked:

- Harness straps must be at or above the shoulders.
- Chest clip should be at the center of child chest, and level with armpits.
- Remove child's bulky coat.

Your child uses this seat until he or she outgrows the harness. Many goes to 50 lbs. or more.

Older, bigger kids (4 yrs. old and 30 lbs) – Booster seats



BOOSTER
SEAT WITH
BACK

BOOSTER
SEAT
WITHOUT
BACK



Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturers. Once your child has outgrown the forward-facing seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat **with** back. The following should be checked:

- Used with seat belt with lap and shoulder straps.
- The lap belt sits low on your child's hips, and not on your child's stomach.
- The shoulder belt is on your child's shoulder and not on your child's neck or under the arm or behind your child's back.
- The seat belt should be snug, flat, and comfortable on your child.
- Your child maybe between 8 to 12 years old before the seat belt fits properly.
- Your child should be over 50 lbs. **before** removing the back of the booster seat.

Child is over 4 ft. 9 inches – Ready for Seat Belt!



SEAT BELT

Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly.

- The lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs and not the stomach.
- The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulders and chest and not cross the neck or face.
- Child should still ride in the back seat until **age 13** and never in front of the airbag.

Top 5 Reminders

Right Seat

Check the label on your car seat to make sure it's appropriate for your child's age, weight, and height. Your car seat has an expiration date and be sure to register your seat. It is the best way for you to learn about a recall in the most timely and dependable manner! Go to <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#35096>.

Right Place

The back seat is the safest place to ride for all children under age 13. But not all cars allow for a car seat in every place that has a seat belt. Check your car owner manual to see where you can put a car seat. Make sure that the car seat or booster seat for each child riding in the car is in the best possible place. Also, make sure other passengers in the car can ride safely.

Right Direction

Keep your child in a rear-facing car seat for as long as possible, usually around age 2 (Infant/convertible). When your child outgrows the seat, move your child to a forward-facing car seat. Make sure to attach the top tether after you tighten and lock the seat belt or lower anchors.

Inch Test

Once your car seat is installed, give it a good shake at the base. A properly installed seat will not move more than an inch when pulled from side to side or front to back.

Pinch Test

Check to make sure that the harness is tightly buckled and coming from the correct slots (check car seat manual), and the chest clip is placed at the armpit level. You should be unable to pinch any excess webbing at your child's shoulder strap. Be sure to remove bulky coats and blankets prior to strapping in.

For Information on where to get your car seat inspected.

IN-PERSON WALK-IN CHECKS

Department of Motor Vehicles
1001 Half Street, SW
Tuesday – Saturday
7 am to 3 pm

Metropolitan Police Department
501 New York Ave, NW
Tuesdays
10 am to 6 pm

VIRTUAL CHECKS

Register
NOW!

Scan the QRCode or visit
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/carseatsignup>
or Email: CarseatsDC@dc.gov

