TIPS TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFER WHILE DRIVING

Use the correct car seat for your child’s age and size.

- Infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for two years or more.

- Once they are facing forward, children should use a forward-facing car safety seat with a harness for as long as possible, until they reach the height and weight limits for their seats. Many seats can accommodate children up to 65 pounds or more.

- When children exceed these limits, they should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle’s lap and shoulder seat belt fits properly. This is often when they have reached at least 4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8 to 12 years old.

- When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use lap-and-shoulder seat belts for optimal protection.

- All children younger than 13 years of age should be restrained in the rear seats of vehicles for optimal protection.

Buying a family car? Here are some things to think about:

- What type of and how many seat belts and car seats will you need?
- Will your car seats fit in the vehicle? Not all seats fit in all cars. Try them out before buying.
- Compact pickup trucks and sports cars are not safe family cars.
- Does the vehicle have safety features such as shoulder belts in the center rear seat, adjustable shoulder belts in the rear side seats, and LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children)?

Choose a safe location in your vehicle.

- Never put an infant in a rear-facing seat in front of an active air bag.
- Plan ahead. Always be sure that there is a seat belt for every child who rides in your car.
- If a child must ride in the front seat, move the vehicle seat as far back as it can go, away from the air bag. Be sure that the child riding in the front is in the correct restraint for her age and size.
- The safest place for all children 12 and younger is the back seat.

Seat belts and tether straps are important.

- Some rear center seats in cars have only a lap belt. You can use a lap belt alone to install a child safety seat, but never use it for a booster. Correct use of a booster seat requires a lap-and-shoulder seat belt.
- If your vehicle has LATCH, you can use it to install a car seat. LATCH attachment points are usually in rear outboard seating positions. Check your vehicle owner’s manual for more information.
- Always attach the top tether strap when your child is riding in a forward-facing car seat.

LEARN MORE:
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chop.edu/safekids

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