



# 11 ways to keep your child safer in a car.

Motor vehicle crashes claim the lives of more than 13 children per day. To best protect your child, choose a safety seat that fits your vehicle, fits your child, and that you will use correctly every time.

- **Always read the vehicle owner's manual and the car seat instructions for correct installation information.**
- **Check your vehicle owner's manual** and tags on the safety belts when you purchase a car seat. Make sure your child's weight and height are within the limits of the car seat. If you buy a convertible seat, check the fit both rear- and forward-facing.
- **Do not buy a used seat** unless you can verify 1) it has not been in a crash; 2) the age of the seat and that it has not expired; and 3) it has not been recalled.
- **Infants and toddlers** need to ride in rear-facing car seats as long as possible. Keep children rear-facing until they reach their car seat's height or weight limits. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow a child to ride rear-facing for two years or more.\*
- **When your child outgrows** the rear-facing seat, he/she should ride in a forward-facing convertible or combination seat with a harness and tether as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed in the car seat manufacturer's instructions.
- **Use the top tether strap** if your car seat and vehicle manufacturer's instructions allow it. When snug, the top tether will reduce the distance your child's head travels in a crash.
- **A child who exceeds the limits** of a forward-facing car seat with the harness is safest in a booster until the adult seat belts fit correctly, usually between 8-12 years old.
- **Install the seat in back;** all children should ride in the back seat until they are at least 13 years old. Never install a car seat in front of an air bag.
- **Install your car seat snugly.** To check, grasp the seat at the bottom near the belt or the LATCH attachment points. The seat should move less than an inch side-to-side or toward the front of the vehicle.
- **Attend a car seat checkup** to be sure the seat is installed correctly and your child is safely secured. To learn more about car seat checks near you, visit [www.safekids.org/events](http://www.safekids.org/events).
- **Your kids are watching what you do!** Make sure you buckle up and stay off your cell phone while driving.

\*AAP Policy Statement, August 2018

**I'M SAFE!**

**SAFE  
KIDS**