



Car Seats

The best car seat is the one that properly fits your child and is used every ride. There are many manufacturers and brands to choose from, here are some important tips on choosing the right seat for your child:

- Choose a seat that properly fits your child's size and fits in your car.
- Always read the car seat and vehicle's manual for top height and/or weight restrictions and the installation instructions.
- Visit a Car Seat Fitting Station to have your car seat properly installed.
- Children under 13 years should always ride in the back seat where it is safest. Airbags are designed for adults and can harm children in a crash.
- Rear facing car seats should never be in the front seat.

Infant: Rear Facing Car Seat (0-2 years)

It is recommended that children ride in a rear facing car seat (or convertible seat rear facing), in the back seat, at least until their 2nd birthday. Your child should remain in a rear facing car seat for as long as possible, until they outgrow the manufacturer's top height OR weight limits. Convertible car seats usually have higher weight limits to allow your child to ride rear facing for longer.

Toddler: Rear Facing to Forward Facing Car Seat (2-4 years)

Keep your child in their rear facing car seat for as long as possible. Once they have outgrown the manufacturer's top height OR weight, they are ready to move to a forward facing car seat with harness. If you are using a convertible car seat (rear to forward facing), keep your child rear facing for as long as the seat manufacturer allows it for their height OR weight.

Younger Children: Forward Facing to Booster Seat (4-8 years)

Your child is safest in a car seat with harness. Delay moving your child to a booster seat until they have outgrown their forward facing seat's top height OR weight limit. Once your child is ready for a booster seat, make sure the lap and shoulder belt is always properly positioned. Your child should continue to use a booster seat until they can properly fit in a seat belt alone, typically between 8-12 years old.

Older Children: Booster Seat to Seat Belt (8-12 years)

NYS law requires all children to remain in a proper child safety restraint (car/booster seat) until their 8th birthday. Seat belts are not designed for children, a booster seat helps raise a child up to properly fit in the belt. Keep your child in their booster seat until they can properly fit in a car's seat belt, usually between 8-12 years old and they reach about 4'9" in height. For a seat belt to fit properly it must lay across your child's hips, not stomach and the shoulder harness should lay comfortably, not against the face or neck. Your child should continue to ride in the back seat until their 13th birthday.

Car Seat Fitting Stations

Locate a free car seat fitting location and schedule an appointment to have your car seat checked specifically for your child. Find a list of Suffolk County stations at <http://trauma.stonybrookmedicine.edu/injury-prevention>

For more information about car seat safety and NYS laws, please visit:

www.safeny.ny.gov/sesa-ndx.htm

www.safercar.gov/parents/Car-Seat-Safety.htm

www.safekids.org/interactive/car-seat-booster-seat-or-seat-belt-where-does-your-kid-fit