

Recommendations for Parents/Caregivers:

As children grow, how they sit in your car, truck, van or SUV should also change. For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers simply need to remember and follow the *4 Steps for Kids*:

1. Use rear-facing infant seats in the back seat from birth to at least one year of age and at least 20 pounds;
2. Use forward-facing toddler seats in the back seat from age one and 20 pounds to about age four and 40 pounds;
3. Use booster seats in the back seat from about age four to at least age eight – unless the child is 4 ft. 9 inches or taller; and
4. Use safety belts in the back seat at age eight or older or taller than 4 ft. 9 inches. All children age 12 or younger should ride in the back seat.

FACTS:

- More than 81 percent of child restraints are used incorrectly, including 88 percent of forward-facing toddler seats, 86 percent of rear-facing infant seats and 85 percent of safety belts, as determined at child passenger safety seat inspection stations across the country.
- The three most common mistakes in installing a child safety seat are (1) not attaching the seat tightly to the car or truck, (2) not fastening the harness tightly enough, and (3) not using the chest clip or using it incorrectly.
- The LATCH System makes it easier to install child seats correctly. Since September 2002, all new child safety seats and new vehicles must have the Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH) system that lets you install a child safety seat without using an adult seat belt.
- You can have an expert check for free whether a child safety seat is installed correctly. Go to www.scdps.org and click on “Fitting Stations” to find an inspection site near you. Or call the Occupant Protection Office at the South Carolina Department of Public Safety at 1-877-349-7187.

Guide for parents in choosing seats (from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration):

Types of Child Safety Seats

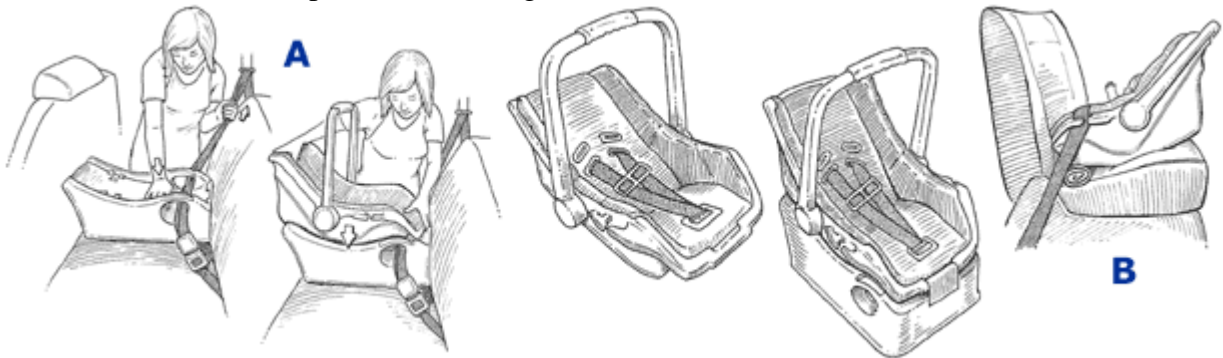
Always read the child safety seat instruction manual. Each manufacturer provides specific instructions regarding proper use and installation of his/her safety seats.

All children age 12 and under should ride properly restrained in the back seat. Infants MUST NEVER ride rear facing in front seats where a passenger air bag is present!!!!

Rear-Facing Infant Seats With and Without Removable Bases MUST:

Face rearward only, recline at a 45° angle, harness slots at or below baby's shoulders; harness chest clip at armpit level.

- Infant seat base installation (A)
- For infants from birth to about 27 inches who weigh up to 20 pounds.
- May require the use of a tightly rolled towel to allow for proper recline. (B)
- An infant's head should stay at least 2" below the top of the child seat. If the infant is tall, not yet 20 pounds, and less than 1 year, move the infant into a convertible seat, which is used rear facing.
- If the infant is not yet 1 year, but weighs over 20 pounds, move the infant into a convertible seat which is recommended for a child up to 20-35 pounds rear facing. This seat is also placed rear facing.



Convertible Seats (from birth to 40 pounds).

Rear and Forward Facing:

When Used Rear Facing:



- All are recommended for use by infants less than 1 year and up to about 20 pounds.
- Some are recommended for rear facing use, for heavier infants (30-35 pounds), and less than 1 year.
- Harness straps should be at or below infant's shoulders when used rear facing.
- Harness chest clip should be at infant's armpit level.

Convertible Seats

When Used Forward Facing:

- All are rated for children up to 40 pounds.
- Used forward facing by children who are between 20 and 40 pounds, and over 1 year.
- Harness straps should be at or above child's shoulders. Use top harness slots of safety seat.
- Harness chest clip should be at child's armpit level.

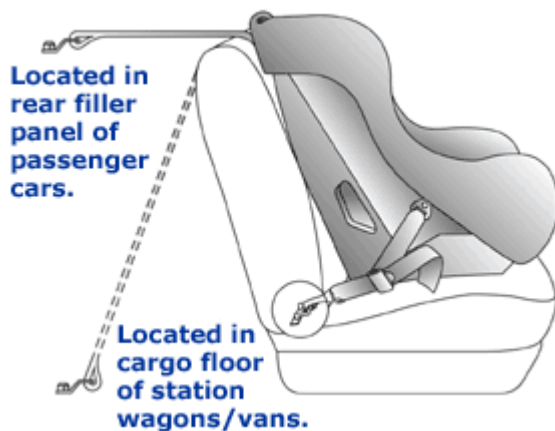


Forward Facing Only Seats:



- Rated for use by children who are between 20 and 40 pounds with a harness. Some convert to booster seats beyond 40 pounds.
- Harness straps should be at or above child's shoulders.
- Harness chest clip should be at armpit level.

The **Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH)** System is designed to make installation of child safety seats easier by requiring child safety seats to be installed without using the vehicle's seat belt system. As of September 1999, all new forward facing child safety seats (not including booster seats) have to meet stricter head protection requirements, which calls for a top tether strap. This adjustable strap is attached to the back of a child safety seat. It has a hook for securing the seat to a tether anchor found either on the rear shelf area of the vehicle or, in the case of mini-vans and station wagons, on the rear floor or the on the back of the rear seat of the vehicle. As of September 2000, all new cars, minivans, and light trucks will have this tether anchor.



By September 1, 2002, two rear seating positions of all cars, minivans and light trucks will come equipped with lower child safety seat anchorage points located between a vehicle's seat cushion and seat back. Also by September 1, 2002, all child safety seats will have two attachments which will connect to the vehicle's lower anchorage attachment points, generally in the outboard seating positions. Together, the lower anchors and upper tethers make up the **LATCH** system. Use either LATCH or the seat belt – never both.

High-Back Booster With 5-Point Harness Used Forward Facing Only

- Recommended for use by children approximately 20 to 40 pounds, when used with harness.
- Harness straps should be at or above child's shoulders.
- Harness chest clip should be at child's armpit level.
- Remove harness when child reaches 40



pounds and use the vehicle's adult lap and shoulder belt across child (belt-positioning booster).

Belt Positioning Booster Seats

Boosts child up providing a higher sitting height, which allows the adult lap and shoulder belt to fit properly

Used Forward Facing Only

- All children who have outgrown child safety seats should be properly restrained in booster seats until they are at least 8 years old, unless they are 4'9" tall.
- Can only be used with the adult lap and shoulder belt. **Never with a lap belt only.**
- Provides the child a higher sitting height, which allows the adult lap and shoulder belt to fit properly.
- The shoulder belt should cross the chest, resting snugly on the shoulder, and the lap belt should rest low across the upper thighs. Never up high across the stomach.
- Styles include high-back, no back, and base only. A high-back booster provides head support not provided by vehicle seats with low backs or no head restraints.
- The mid-point of the back of the child's head (ear level) should not be above the vehicle seat back cushion or the back of the high back booster.
- ***A belt-positioning booster seat should be used until the child can sit with his/her back against the vehicle seat back cushion with knees bent over the seat cushion edge, and feet on the floor, approximately 4'9".**