

General carseat reminders:

- Rear facing a seat is outgrown
 - At the weight limit
 - When there is less than 1" of shell above the head, or the stated height limit is reached
- Forward facing a seat is outgrown
 - At the weight limit
 - When the top of the ear goes over the top of the shell
 - When the shoulders go over the top slots
 - When the stated height limit is reached
- Keep the harness snug, so that you cannot pinch anything horizontally at the shoulder.

Installation reminders:

- Always check for movement at the belt path **only** (where the seatbelt or LATCH strap goes through).
 - Check with a firm handshake from the non dominant hand.
 - Look for less than 1" of movement
- Forward facing make sure the seat is tethered. If you do not have tethers, see about getting them retrofitted.
- Rear facing there may be movement at the head of the seat. That is fine.
- Rear facing, make sure the angle is acceptable. Range varies by seat, but is generally in the 30°-45° range.
- Lock the seatbelt (pull the seatbelt out slowly at the shoulder, or there is a lock at the buckle, it varies by vehicle), or use a locking clip or built in lockoff.

Using the seat:

- Rear facing have the straps at or below the shoulders.
- Forward facing the straps should be at or above the shoulders.
- The chest clip sits so the top of it is even with the top of the armpit.
- Make sure the harness is tight, nothing can be pinched at the shoulders (yes, important enough to mention twice).
- *Never put an infant seat in the seating area of a shopping cart.*

When it's time to change seats:

- Since **2002** the AAP has recommended to face the rear to the maximum limits of the convertible seat. Nowadays that's 35-50 pounds, and ideally **3-4 years old**.
- Harness forward facing until at least about **6 years old**, when kids have the size and maturity to sit properly in a high back booster.
- Use a high back booster until it's outgrown, usually **8-10 years old**.
- Use a backless booster until the seatbelt properly fits, usually **10-12 years old**. The child must at least have:
 - Seatbelt low on the hips/high on the thighs
 - Shoulder belt across the collarbone
 - Bum is all the way back
 - Knees bend at the edge of the seat
 - Feet reach the floor
 - Child can sit properly for the entire ride
- When in doubt, max it out.

Washington State Law (RCW 46.61.687):

- The law states a child must use an appropriate restraint until **8 years old or 4'9"**.
- The law states that a child must use an appropriately fitting seatbelt until **age 16** (when the adult seatbelt law takes over), or use a proper restraint.
- Children must sit in the backseat, when practical to do so, until their **13th birthday**.

Four Ps:

- Planes: Always buy a ticket for your child, and use a carseat until 40 pounds, as per the FAA recommendations
- Pets: Secure any pets. Dogs and cats can use a hardware mounted gate, or use a crate, dog harness, or soft crate in the footwell.
- Projectiles: Anything not buckled down will become a projectile in a crash. Use compartmentalization or tying down to prevent objects from flying. If you would throw it at your baby's head, it's safe to have loose.
- Puffy coats: Do not put anything thick between baby and the harness and the seat. Nothing more than a fleece or sweater (the same goes for adults). A puffy coat, blanket, or added snuzzler can move the harness out of proper position, and add space that will compress in a crash, leading to increased chance of ejection and injury.

Did you know that turning on your headlights decreases your chances of a crash by 5%-10%? You're more visible.

All of the information given today is specific to your car and carseat. Please keep this in mind when sharing or receiving information.