

Car Seat Safety

From the moment they're born, you want the best for your kids.

But it's not always easy to know what's best. ["When you were a kid..."] And things can change.

Take car seats, for example. [groans] They can be a pain.

So it's not surprising that most parents aren't using them in the right way.

But you can learn how to keep your child as safe as possible in the car in the next 3 minutes.

Let's start with the first type of seat you'll need--a rear-facing one.

The base needs to be super tight, which means you can't wiggle it more than an inch or 2 and a half centimeters from side to side.

So you may have to climb in and wrestle with it. [groans] Either the base or the car seat needs to be angled back, so your baby's airway stays open. [giggles] The straps should be at the shoulder level or just below.

And the chest clip needs to be high--all the way up at the armpits. [giggles] And all the straps need to be very snug--no extra space.

Okay, let's talk about forward-facing seats.

The shoulder strap position is different than in rear-facing seats.

Here it should be just above the shoulder.

And the harness needs to be very snug.

So you may have to loosen and tighten it each time you put your kid in.

The chest clip position stays at armpit level.

You may need to get in the habit of sliding it up.

The last type of seat is a booster seat.

Now, don't rush the move to a booster, because your child's safety is at stake.

But, when they're ready, you'll no longer have to wrestle with securing the seat.

The main thing with boosters is the position of the seat belt.

It needs to go across the chest, not the neck.

And the lap belt goes across the top of the thighs, not the belly.

Now, let's talk about the right seat for the right size.

A rear-facing seat is the safest type by far.

Facing backward gives a lot more head and neck protection.

So resist the temptation to better see that adorable face.

It's perfectly fine if their legs are bent, or their feet touch the seat. [slurps] They're happy, comfy, and safe.

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Once they meet the height and weight requirements of your rear-facing seat, you can put them in the forward-facing position. ["Woo hoo!"] How long they stay in a forward-facing seat depends again on their size and the limits of your particular seat.

Some kids are ready to move to a booster by age 4.

Others don't get there until age 7.

It's a good lesson in "Life's not fair." [chuffs] After they start riding in a booster, they'll stay there for a while... probably longer than you think, or your kid wants.

In general, kids need to be in a booster until they reach 80 pounds, 36 kilos, or 4 feet 9 inches, or 145 centimeters.

Some kids are there by age 8, and others don't get there until age 12.

So now you know some important car seat basics.

And you can join the group of people who are doing it right when it comes to car seats and help others get it right too.