

Grandparents and Child Safety Seats



It does not matter if you have grandchildren visiting, are custodial grandparents, or are day care grandparents, the fact is “car seats” have changed dramatically since the “good old days”. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for small children. Properly restrained children have a more than 50% greater chance of surviving a crash. When traveling in a vehicle with grandchildren, always have them in child safety seats and buckled up.

CHILD SAFETY SEATS DO SAVE LIVES

The law in Texas tells us children under age 8 unless taller than 4’9” must ride in child safety seats (includes booster seat) - NOT in a lap, NOT in a portable crib or car bed. Safety experts urge that all children 12 and under should always ride in the back seat, whether the vehicle is air bag equipped or not.

THE 4 STEPS FOR KEEPING A CHILD RIDING SAFELY

- ♥ **STEP 1 - REAR-FACING** - All infants and toddlers should ride in rear-facing car safety seats until they are 2 years old or until they reach the highest weight or height limit allowed by their seat.
- ♥ **STEP 2 - FORWARD-FACING** - All children 2 years or older, or those younger than 2 who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their seat should use a forward-facing seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their seat.
- ♥ **STEP 3 - BOOSTER SEATS** - All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their seat should use a belt-positioning-booster seat until the vehicle lap/shoulder belt fits properly, typically when they reach 4’9” tall at 8-12 years old.
- ♥ **STEP 4 - SEAT BELTS** - When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use lap/shoulder belts for optimal protection.
- ♥ **ALL CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 13 YEARS SHOULD BE RESTRAINED IN THE REAR SEAT OF VEHICLES.**

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, Policy Statement, April 2011.

Shopping Tips for Second-hand/used Child Safety Seats

Never purchase or borrow a used child safety seat under the following conditions:

- The seat has been involved in a moderate or severe crash.
 - The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that child safety seats be replaced following a moderate or severe crash in order to ensure a continued high level of crash protection for child passengers.
 - Most child safety seat manufacturers recommend that a seat be replaced after any crash.
- The seat is on recall by the government and has not been repaired.
- The seat has no date of manufacture and/or model number.
- The seat is older than 6 years.
- The seat is rusted, cracked, or has a broken frame or shell.
- The seat has missing parts, such as the buckle, chest clip, shield, or pad.
- If the instruction booklet is not present and the manufacturer has gone out of business.
- You don't know the history of the seat or cannot find out that information.

Tips for a Successful Trip with Child Safely Restrained in a Child Safety Seat

- **Getting Off on the Right Foot:** Different children travel best at different times of day. Chances of success are increased if the child has plenty of opportunities to burn energy before getting into a car; if the child is comfortable and well fed; and either well rested or ready for a nap--if the child can and will sleep in the car.
- **Keeping the Child's Needs in Mind:** Children need to move while awake. Be prepared to stop more often to let an infant change positions and wiggle about and to let the older child move about outside the confinement of a seat. Rest or picnic areas or fast-food restaurants with play areas are great choices.
- **Pilot Versus Flight Attendant:** Available adults may want to consider taking turns driving and serving as "flight attendant" to young passengers. Patience and creativity are vital ingredients for car trip success. It is very challenging to be the only one responsible for young passengers. A change in responsibilities and faces will keep children entertained and give adults a chance to renew their batteries by doing other, less demanding things--like driving!

Source: Tips for Successful Vehicle Trip with Child Safely Restrained in a Car Safety Seat, Bryan ISD, Parent Education Partnership Program, Mary E. Walraven, SWA, ICCE, Coordinator.