

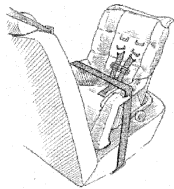
Grandparents and Child Safety Seats

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 that babies and small children under age 4 or less than 36" tall must ride in child safety seats - 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.

GUIDE TO CAR SEATS



Infants until at least 1 year of age and at least 20 pounds should be in a **Rear-facing Child Safety Seat**. *Never use a household carrier.*

REAR FACING CAR SEAT



Toddlers over 1 year old and between 20 and 40 pounds can be in a **Forward-facing Child Safety Seat**.

FORWARD FACING CAR SEAT

Children between 40 and about 60/80 pounds (usually 4 to 8 years old) should be in **Booster Seats**.



BOOSTER SEAT
Belt-Positioning



BOOSTER SEAT with High Back
Belt-Positioning

Usually kids over 80 pounds can fit in **Lap/Shoulder Belts**.



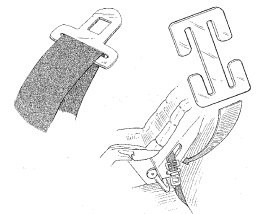
LAP/SHOULDER BELTS
Belt-Positioning

Carefully read your vehicle owner's manual as well as the instruction booklet that comes with the child safety seat to check for correct installation and use.

Locking clips, What Are They?

To attach locking clip:

1. Route belt through the safety seat and fasten.
2. Push down on safety seat and pull safety belt shoulder strap tight
3. Hold shoulder strap and lap belt at fixed length
4. Unfasten belt, attach clip no more than 1/2 inch from latch plate
5. Refasten belt (it should be a very tight fit)



Source: *Baby Seats, Safety Belts and You!*. 2nd ed. Transportation Safety Training center, Virginia Commonwealth University 1996

A regular locking clip comes with all new child safety seats and should be used when the vehicle safety belt has a free-sliding latch plate. Not all safety belts will secure the child safety seat without it. Take a few minutes to check the vehicle owner's manual to determine if there is a need to use the locking clip that is stored somewhere on the back of the seat.

Shopping Tips for Second-hand/used Child Safety Seats

If the decision is made not to purchase a new child safety seat, but to purchase one at a garage sale, thrift shop, or borrow one, it should not be used if it does not meet the following guidelines:

- When the history of the seat is unknown, do not use it
- Determine if the child safety seat in question has been the subject of a recall or, if recalled, that the necessary repair work has been completed correctly
- Inspect the child safety seat fully for the following:
 - < FMVSS 213 compliance label; if not present, do not use
 - < Date of manufacture no greater than 5 years old
 - < Manufacturer's instruction booklet on proper use, which should come with the child safety seat
 - < Structural integrity-no hairline marks in plastic, cracks, loose rivets, etc
 - < All parts are present and in good condition, such as harness straps, retainer clips, padding, shield, tether straps, and bolts
- If child safety seat has been involved in a collision, **DO NOT USE!**

Source: *Standardized Child Passenger Safety, 1998*

Tips for Successful Vehicle 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!

Activity Ideas While on the Road For the Infant and Young Toddler (6 months-15 months)

- U Keep a variety of toys clipped to the car seat or vehicle's clothes hook using plastic links (sold in toy stores). Vary the toys by texture, size and shape, and sound. Always keep an eye on the child to make sure links don't get wrapped around baby in any way.
- U Check catalogs and/or toy stores for "activity centers" that attach to the child's seat or vehicle's set to keep the child occupied. Check dollar stores for inexpensive, new and interesting toys reserved just for the trip. Be sure to match the toy to the age of the child for safety, more fun, and less frustration.
- U Keep pacifiers, bottles, cups, favorite toys, blanket or security item, and small snacks (Cheerios, crackers) handy.
- U Stop and change diapers as soon as possible to prevent discomfort and/or rashes. Stop for feeding as soon as the child indicates need. Quick response, before the child really becomes distressed, will usually save time in the long run.
- U Play comforting music (classical, baroque) or play stories on tape to sooth, interest, or occupy baby.
- U Be prepared to change **your** seat. Small children sometimes feel isolated in back seats--where they are safest. Consider having an adult move next to the child to keep them company and entertained.

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.