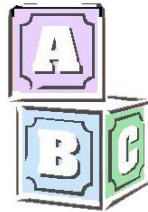


THE ABCs ON CHILD SAFETY SEATS

Nationwide, more young children die each year as passengers in vehicle crashes than from any disease or other kinds of unintentional injuries combined! In Texas, nearly half of the children under 12 years old who were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes were reported as unrestrained. (TX Department of Transportation, Crash Data Analysis and Statistics 2009)



Air Bag Safety

Buckle Everyone

Children in Back

- ♥ Children in rear-facing safety seats should NEVER be placed in the front seat of cars equipped with passenger-side air bags. The impact of a deploying air bag striking a rear-facing child safety seat could result in serious or fatal injury to the child.
- ♥ **Children under 13 should always ride in the back seat!** Because of their high center of gravity and delicate bone structures, infants and toddlers are extremely susceptible to injury in vehicle crashes when not restrained.
- ♥ Child safety seats are effective when installed and used correctly.
- ♥ Check compatibility of a vehicle and child safety seat before making a purchase.

Best Practice

- ♥ 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.

POINTERS FOR HAPPY CHILDREN IN SAFETY SEATS

- ♥ **Start early** – Bring your baby home from the hospital in a child safety seat and never put your baby in a vehicle without one. Children who always ride in a safety seat will not question the practice and will always ride safely.
- ♥ **Be consistent** – there are no excuses, always buckle your child. Never confuse your child by not using the child safety seat. Allowing your child to get out of the safety seat when he/she cries or is fussy only teaches the child to control you.
- ♥ **Use words** – as your infant becomes a toddler and starts using language, explain in simple words that your family rule is that everyone buckles up.
- ♥ **Model good behavior** – children copy parents all the time. By buckling up every time you get in the car, you set the example you want them to follow.
- ♥ **Boredom monster** – the boredom monster may strike at any time. To keep your child busy, have a bag of soft travel toys, books, and activities used only in the car.
- ♥ **Be firm** – nearly every child will try at some point to get out of the safety seat. Don't panic! Stop the car at a safe location. Talk to your child in a firm, serious voice and then re-buckle the child safety seat.
- ♥ **Clue in grandparents** – safety seat products have changed, laws have changed, and knowledge has changed. Grandparents need to know the importance of using safety seats, have rules for grandchildren in their vehicles, and know how to properly install and use child safety seats.
- ♥ **Be comforting** – Talk about what you see. Play games, hum, sing, or listen to a favorite CD. On long trips, stop every hour or so to change positions, diapers, or feed the child.

These activities will make your child more comfortable and happy.

Infants: in back seat and facing back

Someone sitting close talking or singing
Soft puzzles
Soft rattles
Pacifier and/or teethers
Soft toys

Toddlers: in back seat and facing forward

Colorforms
Soft books
Soft photo books
Soft stuffed dolls
Travel bag filled with assorted toys

- ♥ **Remember:** toys need to be soft, have no sharp edges, and safely secured when not in use.

Source: Adapted from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Oklahoma SAFEKIDS Coalition*