

Legislation - P.L. 2015, c.50

The following recommendations will provide the safest way to transport your child according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Additionally it will ensure compliance to the New Jersey Child Passenger Restraint Law. (Title 39:3-76.2a)

Any child under the age of 8 years old and a height of 57 inches shall be secured as follows in the rear seat of a motor vehicle:

- a. A child under the age of 2 years and 30 pounds shall be secured in a rear-facing seat equipped with a 5-point harness.
- b. A child under the age of 4 years and 40 pounds shall be secured as described in (a) until they reach the upper limits of the rear-facing seat, then in a forward-facing child restraint equipped with a 5-point harness.
- c. A child under the age of 8 and a height of 57 inches shall be secured as described in (a) or (b) until they reach the upper limits of the rear-facing or forward facing seat, then in a belt positioning booster seat.
- d. A child over 8 years of age or 57 inches in height must be properly secured by a seat belt.

If there are no rear seats, the child shall be secured as described above in the front seat except that no child shall be secured in a rear-facing seat in the front seat of any vehicle that is equipped with an active passenger-side airbag. The aforementioned is acceptable if the airbag is de-activated.

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death of children over the age of six months in the United States. The proper use of child car seats is one of the simplest and most effective methods available for protecting the lives of our young children in the event of a motor vehicle crash.

However, 3 out of every 4 children in child safety seats are not properly secured, or even worse, not restrained at all. Only the correct use of child car seats will offer the protection your child needs. Please be aware of the facts listed on these Child Safety pages regarding the proper use of child car seats.

There are many different types of child car seats on the market today. Each one must meet federal standards and all provide good protection for your child when used correctly. The "right" seat for you is largely a matter of personal choice. Choose a seat that fits your child and your car, read the instructions carefully, and use the seat correctly on every trip.

Just as there are several types of Child Safety Seats, there are also several methods for securing these seats to a vehicle. Seat belt systems, lap belts or lap and shoulder belts are designed to be used for this purpose.

LATCH, which is an acronym for Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children, was designed to make installing child safety seats in vehicles easier. Nearly every car seat, and most vehicles manufactured since September 1, 2002 are required to have the LATCH system. For more information on LATCH including instructional videos, please click on the following link: [LATCH](#)

For a list of free Child Safety Seat Check events statewide, visit the [Seat Check Schedule](#) page.

For more information about the national Child Passenger Safety program, please visit the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\) web page](#).

Note to Expectant Parents: Plan to have your child safety seat (infant seat) installed in your vehicle at least three weeks before the due date of your baby. By visiting the [Seat Check Schedule](#) page, and finding a nearby open event, or scheduling an appointment for at least three weeks prior to the due date, you'll make sure that you're ready for the big day. Most babies are delivered within the month surrounding the due date, so by including your child seat education three weeks before, the odds of being fully prepared on the birth day are enhanced.

Correct use is easy if you follow four steps:

- Read the manufacturer's instructions for your car seat.
- Face the child safety seat in the proper direction
 - Infant seats always face backwards. Baby rides in a semi-reclining position facing the rear of the car.
 - Convertible seats face backwards in a semi-reclining position for infants under 30 pounds and under 2 year of age, and forward in an upright position for toddlers.
- Secure your child snugly in the car seat.
 - Always buckle the seat's harness system securely to hold your child safely in the seat. Allow no more than one finger-width of slack between your child's collarbone and the harness strap.
- Secure the child car seat with a seat belt.
 - Anchoring the seat properly with a seat belt is critical. A seat that is not buckled securely to the car can tip over, slide sideways or, in a crash, be ejected from the car.
 - Check your instruction manual to find out how to route the seat belt properly and fasten it tightly.