

# **R**ules for Safe Travel with Children

**Celebrate CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY with us  
by checking the safety of every person who rides in your vehicle.**

To make sure everyone in the family is buckled right, follow these rules for safe travel:

- Read both the **car seat instructions** and the **vehicle owner's manual** before installing a car seat.
- **All children** under 13 should ride in a back seat.
- When installing your child's car seat, place your weight on the car seat and lock the seat belt according to the vehicle's instructions, located on the seat belt or in the vehicle owner's manual. **Check the installation** at the belt path and allow no more than 1 inch of side-to-side or forward movement.
- **Infants** should ride rear-facing and semi-reclined to no more than 45 degrees, until at least age 1 and 20 pounds. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends keeping children rear-facing to the highest weight or height allowed by the child safety seat's manufacturer. Remember NEVER place a rear-facing infant in front of a passenger side air bag. Place the harness in the slots at or below the shoulders. Tighten the harness until it lies in a relatively straight line without any slack or sagging but not so tight as to press into the child's body causing discomfort. Adjust the chest clip on the harness to armpit level (if manufacturer provides one).
- **Toddlers** ride forward-facing and upright once they reach at least age 1 and 20 pounds. Children should stay in the forward-facing seat with a harness until they are 40 pounds. Place the harness through the *reinforced* slots on the seat (following manufacturer's). Tighten the harness until it lies in a relatively straight line without any slack or sagging *as indicated above*. Place harness retainer clip (chest clip) at armpit level.
- NHTSA recommends that all children who have outgrown child safety seats be properly restrained in a **booster seat** until they are at least eight years old, and approximately 4 feet 9 inches tall. Use the belt positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt properly adjusted to fit a small child over the hips and shoulder. Children should stay in a belt positioning booster seat until the lap and shoulder belt fit them correctly.  
For children age eight through adult, it is important to use a **properly positioned seat belt**. Properly positioned means that the shoulder belt is across the center of the chest and shoulder. The lap belt is low and snug across the hips. **NEVER** place a shoulder belt behind the back or under the arm.

## **BUCKLE Up**

Traffic Injury  
Prevention Project



**Every Time, Every Ride**

For more information Call 1-800-CAR-BELT or visit

## 5 Step Test for Seat Belt Use

A child must be able to meet the following criteria to correctly use a vehicle seat belt.

- Be tall enough to sit without slouching.
- Keep his/her back and buttocks against the vehicle seat back.
- Keep his/her knees completely bent over the edge of the vehicle seat.
- Keep his/her feet flat on the floor, and
- Be able to remain comfortably seated this way.

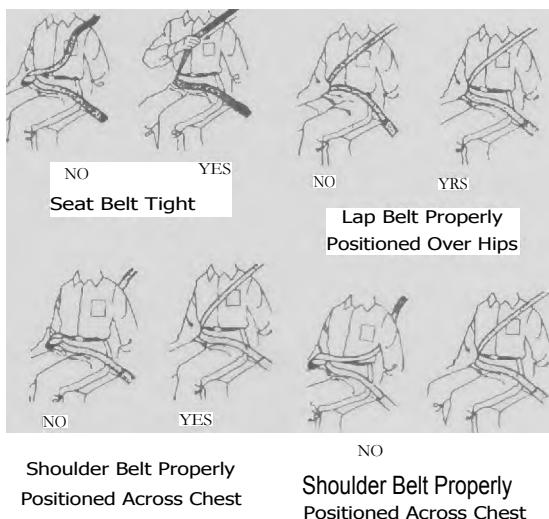


### Securing Children With Seat Belts

Whether a parent is securing a child in the seat belt or if the child is old enough to secure himself, it is important that the seat belt is used correctly. These four key steps must be followed to get the full benefit of the seat belt during a crash and to reduce the possibility of injuries.

- The child can sit with his or her back against the vehicle seat; knees bend at front edge of seat.
- The lap belt stays low and tight across the hips and upper thighs
- The shoulder belt crosses the center of the chest and collarbone.
- The head restraint is adjusted properly behind the center of the back of the head.

### Correct Use Of Seat Belts



## Parent Advice for Seat Belt Use

1. Involve "pre-teens" in family discussions about safety in all motor vehicles.
2. Teach children that safety belts save lives and that an unbuckled passenger is likely to injure others.
3. Make sure the shoulder belt fits correctly across the center of the chest and collarbone, and the lap belt remains low and snug across the hips/upper thighs, and that good posture is maintained.
4. Teach children to counter peer pressure with the facts.
5. Make sure that other drivers have the same rules as you do and enforce them in their vehicles if car-pooling.
6. Limit the number of passengers you transport to avoid driver distraction.
7. Involve your children in family discussions and setting of "house and car rules". Discuss who the children are allowed to ride in a car with, when a child should refuse a ride, and that buckling up is required.

### Tips for Young Drivers

Seat belts are designed so that the strongest areas of the body—the bones of the hips and shoulder—absorb the forces in a crash.



Seat belts prevent you, and other occupants, from being thrown around in the vehicle, into each other, or being ejected from the vehicle.

Seat belts provide the greatest protection against occupant ejection.

**ALWAYS:**

Wear the lap and shoulder belt adjusted low and snug across the hips and the shoulder belt is positioned across the center of the chest and shoulder.

Sit at least 10 inches away from the steering wheel.

Sit upright and sit back in the seat.

# Growing Up Safe... It's a 4 Step process



## Child Passenger Safety Basics

As children grow, how they sit in your car, truck or SUV should change. These guidelines will help you choose the correct child restraint for each stage of your child's growth and development. Protect your child from injury or death by following all four steps!

**Before Baby Arrives** — When you're an expectant mother, it's important to always wear your seat belt to protect you and your unborn child. Wear the lap belt across your hips and below your belly with the shoulder belt across your chest (between the breasts).

### Step 1 — Rear-Facing

For the best possible protection keep infants in a back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible, up to the maximum height or weight limit of their particular car seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until a minimum of one year of age and at least 20 pounds.

### Step 2 — Forward-Facing

When children outgrow their rear-facing car seats (at a minimum of one year of age and at least 20 pounds) they should ride in a forward-facing child safety seats, in a back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of their particular seat (usually around age 4 years and 40 pounds).

### Step 3 — Belt-Positioning Booster Seat

Once children outgrow their forward-facing car seat (usually around four years of age and 40 pounds), they should ride in belt-positioning booster seats, in a back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lies across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall).

### Step 4 — Seat Belt

When children outgrow their belt-positioning booster seats, (usually at eight years of age or when they are approximately 4'9" tall) they can use the adult seat belt in a back seat, if it fits properly, (the lap belt lays across the hips/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the center of the chest and shoulder). All children under age 13 should ride in a back seat.

## More Information on Buckling Up Kids Safely

- Always read the child safety seat (car seat) instructions and the vehicle owner's manual.
- Follow all air bag warnings provided in the car seat instructions and the vehicle owner's manual.
- Do not use car seats that are second-hand. Second-hand seats may have missing parts, labels or instructions. They may have previously been involved in a crash.
- Child safety seat manufacturers state that car seats that have been in a crash need to be replaced. Seats that have been in a moderate or severe crash must be replaced. NHTSA developed guidelines for minor crash criteria which can be accessed on their website [www.NHTSA.dot.gov](http://www.NHTSA.dot.gov) or you can contact PA TIPP at 1-800-CAR-BELT for more information. Check with insurance companies regarding their crash replacement policy.
- Most car seats have a six-year life span. Check the car seat label or the instructions for an expiration date or time frame. Car seats used beyond their life span are not considered safe.
- If you are unsure of how to use or install your car seat, in Pennsylvania you can contact the PA Traffic Injury Prevent Project at 1-800-CAR-BELT or [www.pakidstravelsafe.org](http://www.pakidstravelsafe.org) for information on fitting station locations.

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