

## CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY BASICS

### Rear-Facing Car Seats

- Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until age 2, or as long the car seat manufacturer allows.
- The child always rides in the back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- Harness straps are at or below shoulder level. Harness straps should fit snugly enough that you cannot pinch any webbing at the child's shoulders.
- Chest clip should be fastened at armpit level.
- The car seat is buckled tightly using the seat belt or **LATCH** (but not both), and doesn't move more than one inch when pulled side-to-side at the belt path.
- The car seat has the correct recline angle.
- The child always rides in a car seat that is size and age-appropriate and doesn't have additional head support, toys or harness covers added to it.
- Move from an infant seat to a convertible seat, which has a higher rear-facing height and weight limit.

### Forward-Facing Car Seats

If the child is over age 2 and has outgrown the weight and/or height limits for the rear-facing seat:

- The child should ride in the back seat.
- The child always rides in a car seat appropriate for their weight and height.
- Harness straps are at or above the shoulders and should fit snugly enough that you cannot pinch any webbing at the child's shoulders.
- Chest clip should be fastened at armpit level.
- The car seat is buckled tightly using the seat belt or **LATCH** (but not both) and doesn't move more than one inch when pulled side to side at the belt path.
- Always connect the top tether on the car seat to the appropriate tether anchor in the vehicle.
- **LATCH** can only be used to 65 pounds (combined weight of the child and the car seat). If the combined weight exceeds 65 pounds, use the seatbelt.

### Booster Seats

If the child has outgrown the weight and/or height limit of the forward-facing car seat:

- The child should ride in the back seat.
- The child always rides in a booster seat using a seat belt with lap and shoulder belt.
- The lap belt sits low on the hips, not on the stomach.
- The shoulder belt is on the shoulder — not on the neck, under the arm or behind the back.
- The seat belt is snug, flat and routed through the belt guides of the booster seat.
- Child must have head support either from the vehicle seat/head restraint or from a high-back booster seat.
- The child may be between the ages of 8 to 12 before the seat belt fits properly without a booster seat. Follow the 5-Step Test.

### Seat Belts

If the child has outgrown the booster seat by height and/or weight:

- Do the 5-Step Test to determine if your child is ready to be out of a booster seat.
- Children under 13 should always ride in the back seat.
- The child should always use a seat belt with a lap and shoulder belt.
- The lap belt sits low on the hips, not on the stomach.
- The shoulder belt is on the shoulder-not on the neck, under the arm or behind the back.
- The seat belt is snug and flat on the child. If the seat belt does not fit right, the child must use a booster seat.

## THE 5-STEP TEST

1. Is your child's back against the vehicle seat?
2. Do your child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the vehicle seat?
3. Is the lap belt low on the tops of the thighs, not on the stomach?
4. Is the shoulder belt between the shoulder and neck?
5. Can your child sit with the proper seat belt position the entire trip?

If you say "No" to any of these questions, your child should be in a booster seat.



## WHAT IS LATCH?

### Lower Anchors & Tethers for Children

## PLEASE DRIVE SAFELY AND BUCKLE UP!

To learn more about how to keep your child safe, visit:

[ChildrensOmaha.org](http://ChildrensOmaha.org)

To schedule a car seat appointment at Children's, call **402-955-8090**.

Children's Hospital & Medical Center  
8200 Dodge Street  
Omaha, NE 68114  
402-955-5400

## NEBRASKA SAFETY LAWS-LB 42

- All children up to age 8 must ride correctly secured in a federally-approved child safety seat.
- Children ride rear-facing until age 2 or until they reach the upper weight or height limit allowed by the car seat's manufacturer.
- Children under age 8 must ride in the back seat, as long as there is a back seat equipped with a seatbelt and is not already occupied by other children under 8 years of age.
- Children ages 8 to 18 must ride secured in a safety belt or child safety seat (booster seat).
- Childcare providers must transport all children securely in an appropriate federally-approved child safety seat or safety belt.
- Children up to age 18 are prohibited from riding in cargo areas.
- Violation carries a \$25 fine, plus court costs and 1 point is assessed against the operator's driving record.
- This applies to residents and non-residents.

## IOWA SAFETY LAWS

In Iowa, parents are required to make sure their children are properly restrained in a car seat when riding in a motor vehicle. The law states:

- A child under the age of 1 who weighs less than 20 pounds must be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system.
- A child under the age of 6 must be secured in a safety seat or booster seat. A seat belt alone is not appropriate.
- Children between the ages of 6 to 11 must be secured in a child restraint system or by a safety belt.
- All children under the age of 18 must wear a seat belt.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ALWAYS follow the manufacturer's instructions for both the car seat and the vehicle for correct use and installation.
- ALL passengers, including adults, should be properly buckled in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt. Pregnant moms should wear a seat belt across the shoulder and under the belly across the hips.
- Only use items that originally came with the car seat. Mirrors and toys are discouraged as they pose a safety hazard and many car seat manufacturers will not allow them to be used in the vehicle.
- Car seats expire. Check for an expiration date on the back of the car seat on a sticker or stamped into the plastic. It will also be indicated in the instruction manual or call the manufacturer.
- Car seats can be recalled for various reasons. Make sure you register your car seat with the manufacturer.
- Be aware of what you have loose in the vehicle as it may become a projectile in a sudden stop or crash.
- NEVER leave your child alone in or around a vehicle. ALWAYS leave something in the back seat that you need, such as a phone, purse, wallet or shoe so you will check the back seat every time you drive with your child.
- Harness straps should be snug against the child's body. Avoid bulky clothing like a winter coat. A thin layer of clothing, such as a light jacket, is acceptable. A blanket or coat may be placed OVER the harness straps.
- Infant seats are for travel ONLY. It is not recommended to leave a child in an infant seat for extended periods of time. NEVER leave a child unattended or place infant seats on elevated surfaces.

## CAR SEATS AT A GLANCE

### *The Car Seat Check Up:*

- **RIGHT SEAT.** Check the label on your car seat to make sure it's appropriate for your child's age, weight and height. Like milk, your car seat has an expiration date. Please double-check the label on your car seat to make sure it is still safe.
- **RIGHT PLACE.** Kids are VIPs, just ask them! We know all VIPs ride in the back seat, so keep all children in a back seat until they are 13.
- **RIGHT DIRECTION.** Keep your child in a rear-facing car seat until at least age 2. When he or she outgrows the seat, move your child to a forward-facing car seat and make sure to attach the top tether after you tighten and lock the seat belt or lower anchors (**LATCH**).
- **INCH TEST.** Once your car seat is installed, give it a good shake where the seat belt or lower anchors are at the base. Can you move it more than an inch side-to-side or front to back? A properly installed seat will not move more than an inch.
- **PINCH TEST.** Make sure the harness is tightly buckled and coming from the correct slots (check car seat manual). Now, with the chest clip placed at armpit level, pinch the harness at your child's shoulders. If you are unable to pinch any excess webbing, you're good to go!

Please read the vehicle and car seat instruction manuals to help you with this checklist. If you are having any trouble or have concerns, please contact Children's Car Seat Fitting Station for an appointment or visit our website for more tips and local car seat check events.

