

CAR SEAT SAFETY

INFANTS (Birth-age 1) / Rear-Facing Seats

- My infant always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- My infant always rides in a car seat made for infants her size.
- My infant faces the back of the car in a car seat.
- My infant's car seat is buckled tightly in the car and doesn't move more than one inch when I pull it.
- The straps are snug on my infant and I can't fit more than one finger under the strap.
- Use the Rear-facing infant or Rear-facing convertible safety seat as long as possible to the rear-facing height or weight limit of the seat.
- *Note- your infant may grow out of the "Bucket" / Infant seat before age one and you will need to install a Rear-facing convertible seat.
- **NEVER TURN THE CARSEAT FORWARD –FACING BEFORE 1 YEAR AND 20-22 POUNDS!**

TODDLERS (> age 1 AND 20-40 pounds / Forward-Facing Seats)

- My toddler always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- My toddler always rides in a car seat made for kids her age and size.
- My toddler's car seat is buckled tightly in the car and doesn't move more than 1 inch when I pull it.
- The straps are snug on my toddler and I can't fit more than one finger under the strap.

YOUNG CHILDREN (4-8 years old AND over 40 pounds / Booster Seats)

- Young children should ride in a Forward-Facing safety seat as long as possible, up to the upper height or weight limit (40-80 pounds) of the harness. Usually 4+ years old.
- Do not place your child in a Booster Seat until he/she has reached **4 years AND 40 pounds**.
- My child always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- My child always rides in a booster seat.
- I **MUST** have both lap and shoulder belts in the back seat of my car to use a Booster Seat.
- The lap belt is on my child's hips, not his stomach.
- The shoulder belt is on my child's shoulder, not his neck.
- The safety belt is snug, flat and comfortable on my child.
- Summary: Correctly secure children over the age of 4 AND 40 pounds in a Booster Seat or other appropriate child restraint until the adult lap and shoulder safety belt fits correctly (Usually by about 4'9 and 80-100 lbs, usually between 8-12 years).

OLDER CHILDREN (8 years old or older / Adult Safety Belt)

- In general, once children outgrow their booster seat (usually at 4'9, 100 pounds) they can use the Adult Safety Belt if it fits them properly. *See section on current Texas Law below.
- My child always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- My child always uses a safety belt.
- I have both lap and shoulder belts in a back seat of my car.
- The lap belt is on my child's hips/tops of thighs NOT his stomach.
- The shoulder belt crosses the center of my child's shoulder and center of the chest, NOT his neck, under his arm or behind him.
- The safety belt is snug, flat and comfortable on my child. If the safety belt does not fit properly, use a booster seat.

TEXAS BOOSTER SEAT LAW

- Effective since September 1, 2009 the new Booster Seat Law applies to the "Child passenger safety system" which includes traditional car seats with harnesses AND booster seats – both high-back and backless versions.
- The law also requires all safety seats and booster seats to be installed according to the instructions of the manufacturer of the safety seat system.
- Because of the changes of the wording in the law (SB61), the following legal interpretation should be applied:
 1. Once a child reaches eight (8) years old, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.
 2. If the child is younger than eight years old, BUT they are already 4'9" tall, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.
 3. If a child is eight years old or older and not yet 4'9" tall, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.
 4. It is recommended that children younger than 13 should never ride in the front seats of vehicles with active passenger air bags. If you do have to transport a child in the front seat in an emergency the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) advises to make sure the front seat is moved all the way back on the track, placing as much room as possible between the deployment zone of the air bag and the vehicle seat and of course **NEVER** place a Rear-Facing safety seat on a front seat.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY INFORMATION:

- Young children restrained in child safety seats have an 80% lower risk of fatal injury than those who are unrestrained.
- Check www.recalls.gov to inquire about any recalls or safety notices on child safety seats. Avoid purchasing safety seats from resale stores, garage sales or flea markets to ensure that your child's seat has all of its parts, labels and instructions and has never been involved in a crash.
- Children are better protected the longer they can stay in each phase. Keep children in each seat up to the maximum age/weight/height limits before moving to the next phase.
- **Never leave your child alone in a car not even for a minute. Example: the outside temperature in Texas may be 101 degrees, but 140 degrees inside the car!!!**

CAR SEAT FITTINGS:

- 4 out of 5 car seats are used incorrectly. Ensure that your child is safe.
- The Texas Health Plano campus offers car seat fittings and inspection. Call the information line at 1-877-847-9355 Monday through Friday or go to texashealth.org and click on "classes and events".
- Children's Medical Center also offers free car seat fittings and inspection by appointment only. Call 214-456-2059 to reach the Children's Car Seat Shop.