

Rear-facing car seat

A rear-facing car seat is a seat that faces the rear of the car. Facing the back is five times safer than facing the front. It is safer because a child's head, neck and spine are better protected. Keep kids rear facing as long as they are within the weight and height limits for the car seat.



Proper fit is key to safety



Harness straps are at or below the shoulders and should be snug

Chest clip is at armpit level

Top of the child's head is at least one inch below the top of the car seat

Buckle is in front of the child with no gaps

Use rear-facing car seats correctly:

- Always check the car seat and vehicle owner's manual for the correct way to use and install.
- Never place a rear-facing child seat in front of an airbag.
- Check with the car seat manufacturer before using accessories that did not come with the seat. This includes headrests, blankets and padding.
- Once installed, the seat should move no more than one inch from side to side or front to back at the belt path.
- It's okay if your child's feet touch the back of the vehicle seat. Keeping your child rear facing provides more protection.
- Do not use car seats that are old, expired or have been in a crash.

What comes next? 

Children's Wisconsin Booster and Car Seat Clinic
To schedule an appointment, call Central Scheduling
(877) 607-5280. (Se habla Español)

chw.org/carseats

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Kids can move into a forward-facing car seat when:

They are at least 2 years old and have outgrown the rear-facing only car seat. If they are younger than 2 and outgrowing the rear-facing seat, look for a seat that goes rear facing to higher weights and heights. This may allow them to stay rear facing past the age of 2.

Forward-facing car seat



It is best to keep kids forward facing in a car seat with a harness as long as they are within the weight and height limits for the car seat. The harness in a forward-facing car seat protects by contacting the strongest parts of the body and spreading crash forces over a wide area.

Parenting tips for car seats:

- Riding in the back seat and in a car seat is required by law.
- Always using a car seat correctly makes a safe habit for children.
- Pull over if a child gets upset. It might be time for everyone to take a break.
- Praise kids when they are sitting in the car seat and belted correctly.
- Wear your seat belt. Children are more likely to buckle up if they see a parent or caregiver buckled up.
- Let others who drive your kids know that a car seat is a must.