

# A Reference for Proper Child Restraint Use



## Rear-facing Infant or Convertible Seat

A child must be rear-facing until he/she is at least 2 years of age or has reached the maximum height and weight of the rear-facing car seat. Never place a rear-facing car seat in front of an active front passenger side air bag.

## The Harness:

- Straps must be at or below the child's shoulders.
- Straps must fit snugly. The harness should lie straight without sagging.
- Chest clip should be at armpit level.

## The Car Seat:

- Must be secured with the seat belt or lower LATCH strap threaded through the correct belt path.
- Must be tightly installed, allowing no more than one inch of side-to-side movement when pulled at the belt path.
- Must be in a semi-reclined position, no more than 45 degrees, following the manufacturer's instructions.



## Forward-Facing Seat

Once a child has outgrown the rear facing child seat, he/she can move to a forward-facing child seat. Children should remain forward-facing for as long as possible, up to the maximum height and weight allowed by the seat manufacturer.

## The Harness:

- Straps must be at or above the child's shoulders.
- Straps must fit snugly. The harness straps should lie straight without sagging.
- Chest clip should be at armpit level.

## The Car Seat:

- Must be secured with the tether and seat belt or lower LATCH strap, threaded through the correct belt path.
- Must be tightly installed, allowing no more than one inch of side-to-side movement when pulled at the belt path.
- Must be in an upright position, unless the manufacture allows the seat to be reclined in the forward-facing position.



## Belt Positioning Booster Seat

Children should use the lap and shoulder belt, with the booster seat, until they fit the vehicle's seat belt correctly, at approximately 4 feet, 9 inches tall and between 8 to 12 years of age. Note: A child should use a high-back booster seat if the vehicle has low seat backs or no head restraints.

The booster seat must be used with the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt following the correct belt path.

## The lap belt:

- Must cross the lower hips and upper thighs, and should be snug.

## The shoulder belt:

- Must be adjusted so it crosses the center of the shoulder and chest.
- Must never be worn behind the back or under the arm.



## Safety Belt

A child wearing a safety belt must be at least 8 years of age or 4 feet, 9 inches and able to wear the safety belt correctly. The lap belt should be low and snug on the hips/upper thighs, and the shoulder belt snug across the center of the chest and shoulder.

- Passengers should sit upright with their back against the vehicle seat back cushion.
- The child's knees should bend comfortably at the front edge of the vehicle seat, with their feet flat on the floor.
- The lap belt must be low and snug across the hips and upper thighs – never across the abdomen.
- The shoulder belt must be snug across the center of the chest and shoulder – never behind the back or under the arm.
- The head restraint should be properly positioned behind the child's head.

Images courtesy of the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.