

CHILD CAR SEATS

Infant and child car seats save lives. Most states require them for all children under age 4 and those weighing less than 40 lb (18.14 kg).

A child who is not in a car seat can be seriously injured or killed during a crash or an abrupt stop, even at low speeds. A parent's arms are not strong enough to hold and protect a baby during a car accident. Many unrestrained children die because they are torn from an adult's arms during an accident.

Set a good example for your children by always wearing your own seat belt, and always insist that they buckle up.

Requirements for car seats

Buy a car seat appropriate for your child's current weight and age:

- Use an **infant car seat** that reclines and faces the rear until your baby is at least 1 year of age and weighs at least 20 lb (9.07 kg).
- Use a **toddler seat** that faces the front and has a shield or harness for babies and children over 1 year and 20 lb (9.07 kg) to 40 lb (18.14 kg). Some infant seats can be converted into toddler seats.
- Use a **booster seat** for children over age 4 and over 40 lb (18.14 kg). This raises the child and allows him or her to see out of the window. Use regular lap and shoulder belts. Adjust the shoulder belt to fit across the shoulder, not the neck.

Never buy a used car seat. If a car seat has been in an accident or misused, it may not fully protect your baby.

Proper positioning

The safest position for your baby or child is in the back, middle seat of the car.

- **Do not** place your child's car seat in the front seat of any vehicle with a passenger side air bag that cannot be turned off.
- **Do not** allow anyone under age 12 to sit in the front seat of any vehicle with a passenger side air bag that cannot be turned off.

Make sure that your child is properly secured in the seat and that the seat is properly secured in the vehicle. Read the owner's manual to learn how to use and install the seat. For maximum safety, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for car seat use. Do not let your child get out of his or her seat while the car is moving. If your child is crying, stop the car, take the child out of the seat, take care of his or her needs, and put him or her back into the seat before the car starts moving again. If cries start again soon after, stop and check the child again.