

Car Seat Safety from American Academy of Pediatrics

We follow the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations for car seat safety. The AAP guidelines are even more stringent than Texas state law; because child safety is our top priority, we follow their recommendations.



Car Seats

Rear facing car seat guidelines

Keep your child rear facing until they outgrow the factory limits (usually 35 lbs) and are older than 2 years (must meet both criteria)

- Adjust harness height to be at or **below** shoulders
- Tighten harnesses so there is no slack
- Place chest clip at armpit level and remove twists and tangles
- Install car seat with a locked seatbelt or Lower Anchors & Tethers for Children (LATCH); seat should not move more than one inch in any direction
- Most car seats expire after 6 years - check the manufacture date!
- Long folded legs are okay!

Forward facing car seat guidelines

Keep your child forward facing in 5-point harness until they reach max harness weight (varies per manufacturer) - most kids are 6 years or older.

- Adjust harness height to be at or **above** shoulders

Remember, **no aftermarket products** are considered safe to add to a car seat unless they are produced by the car seat manufacturer. Aftermarket products include seat strap pads, neck support, or pillows. These products are considered NOT SAFE and should not be used.



Booster seat

Keep child in booster seat until taller than 4' 9" (144 cm) AND at least 80 lbs. - many children are 10 years or older.

- Always use lap and shoulder belt



Vehicle seat belt alone and front vs back seat

Vehicle seat belt alone

To ride without a booster, **children/teens should pass The 5-Step Test**. To pass this test, children/teens should be able to do **all** the following:

1. Sit back against the seat
2. Have knees bent at the seat edge
3. Have the shoulder belt sit between the neck and arms (if shoulder belt is high on neck in an accident, serious neck and/or rib injuries could occur)
4. Have the lap belt lay low on the thighs (if lap belt sits high on belly in an accident, serious organ damage could occur)
5. Be able to sit in this position for the entire car ride

If the child/teen can do **all** of these, he/she can ride using the vehicle seat belt alone.

Front vs back seat

Rules for sitting in the front vs back seat are determined by age, height, **and** weight. Those under 13 years of age, need to sit in the back seat. **Once the teen is 13 years and 5 feet tall (60 inches, 152 cm) and 100 lbs, he/she can move to the front seat.**