



# Safe Car Seat Practices

## Best Practices for Newborn & Infant Car Seat Safety

Give your baby the safest start by following these proven guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and HealthyChildren.org

- 1. Safest location**  
Always place your baby in the **back seat**—never in front of an active airbag.
- 2. Rear-facing as long as possible**  
Start with a rear-facing-only seat (infant car seat) from the moment you leave the hospital. Continue using rear-facing convertible or all-in-one seats **until your child exceeds the maximum height or weight of the seat**, not based on age alone.
- 3. Proper harnessing & positioning**
  - Harness straps must be at or **below the shoulders** when rear-facing.
  - Straps should be snug—you shouldn't be able to pinch any slack at the shoulder ("pinch test").
  - Chest clip must be positioned at armpit level.
- 4. Prevent head slumping**  
Ensure the seat is installed at the **proper recline angle** to keep your newborn's head from falling forward. Use any angle indicators or a rolled towel/pool noodle under the base if needed.
- 5. Keep layers light**  
Avoid buckling your baby in a thick coat. Instead, dress them in thin layers and place blankets or coats over—and not under—the harness.
- 6. Limit non-travel use**  
Car seats are for travel only—not for extended sleep, feeding, or sitting outside the car. If your baby falls asleep in the seat, move them to a **firm, flat sleep surface** as soon as possible.

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## Local Austin, TX Resources for Car Seat Installation Assistance

Protect yourself—and your little one—by making use of trusted community car seat services:

- **Dell Children's "Kids in Cars" Program**  
Offers car seat inspections, installations, and education by **Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs)**. Covers Central Texas (Travis, Williamson, Bastrop, Hays, Caldwell counties). Call **512-324-8687** to schedule. [Ascension](#)
- **Safe Kids Austin – Kids in Cars (Dell Children's)**  
A local coalition that runs **car-seat checkups**, safety workshops, and community education. Call **512-324-TOTS (8687)** to book. [Texas Health Servicesvolrock.org](https://www.texashealthservicesvolrock.org)

## Local Austin, TX Resources for Car Seat Installation Assistance

- **Austin Public Health / Neighborhood Car Seat Inspections**  
Monthly inspections available at neighborhood centers in partnership with Dell Children's and Kids and Cars. Call the listed location for appointment details. [Austin Texas](#)
- **Safe Riders Program (Texas DSHS)**  
Free car seat checkup events and CPST services. For the Austin area, contact **Safe Kids Austin** or Texas's Safe Riders at [saferiders@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:saferiders@dshs.texas.gov) or 1-800-252-8255. [Texas Health Servicesconnectatxpublic.findhelp.com](#)
- **The Car Seat Lady** is a comprehensive, expert-driven website offering practical guidance on choosing, installing, and using child car seats safely, plus related vehicle and safety resources for parents and caregivers. Check out her website at: [The Car Seat Lady](#)

