

# Car seats

It's important that you **always** secure your child in a car seat when riding in the car. Not only is it important to protect him from injury: It's the law.

## Minnesota state law

**All children up to age 8 years are required to ride in an age-appropriate car seat in a moving vehicle.**

Selecting and installing the right seat can sometimes be confusing. There are many types of seats, and your choice should depend on your child's age and body size.

**All babies and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car seat (facing the back of the car) until they are 2 years of age. Or, until they reach the highest weight or height limit listed on the car seat.**

Safety experts agree: Children should continue to ride rear-facing up to age 2 or until they reach the highest weight and height allowed by their car seat manufacturer. This is because the most fragile parts of their bodies (head, neck, and spine) get the best protection in the rear-facing position in the event of a car accident.

**All toddlers 2 years or older should be switched to a forward-facing car seat with a 5 point harness. Toddlers younger than 2 years of age who have reached the weight or height limits listed for rear-facing on the car seat, should also switch to a forward-facing car seat with a 5 point harness.**

For information on different types of rear-facing and forward-facing car seats, see next page.

## Tips for using car seats

- Safety seats must be installed the right way to prevent injuries.
- Always read both the manufacturer's instructions for the car seat AND your motor vehicle owner's manual to see what they say about installing car seats in your vehicle.
- Check the seat's instruction manual for weight and height restrictions for each child safety seat.
- Children under age 13 should always ride in the rear seat of a car.
- Never use a car seat that is damaged or has been in an accident. If you received the seat as a "hand-me-down," make sure that you can learn the history of the seat from the person giving it to you.
- Car seats generally last for six years after their manufacture date and should not be used after that time. Consult your seat manual for the length of time the seat can be used.



Each car seat is different and has its own instructions. This is why it's so important to consult the manual that comes with your child's seat to make sure you are using it properly.

## More resources




Need a car seat? UCare provides free car seats and in-person safety education to eligible pregnant members and children up to age 8 through the S.E.A.T.S. (Seats, Education and Travel Safety) Program. Contact UCare Customer Services at the number on the back of your member ID card.

Need help with a car seat you already own? To find out where to get free child safety seat inspections, call Seat Checks at 1-866-SEAT-CHECK or go online to <[www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org)> for help in English or Spanish.

## Rear-facing car seats

Seat type	Main features	Positioning/growth limits
<p data-bbox="310 212 565 237"><b>Infant carrier seat</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="834 212 1154 422">Has a carrying handle and can be quickly moved in and out of the car by using a snap-on base. Can be used with or without the base.</p>	<p data-bbox="1209 212 1463 237"><b>Rear-facing ONLY.</b></p> <p data-bbox="1209 247 1511 390">Can be used until the baby is 20-30 pounds, depending on the seat brand.</p>
<p data-bbox="321 594 553 619"><b>Convertible seat</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="834 594 1162 737">Larger seat. Stays installed in the car. Does not have a carrying handle.</p>	<p data-bbox="1209 594 1495 695"><b>Starts as rear-facing seat and later can be turned forward-facing.</b></p> <p data-bbox="1209 705 1528 884">Lasts longer because it can be used for children up to 40-65 pounds, depending on the seat brand.</p>

## Forward-facing car seats

<p data-bbox="358 1110 526 1136"><b>Convertible</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="71 1161 440 1545"> <p data-bbox="175 1165 337 1190"><b>Rear-facing</b></p>  </div> <div data-bbox="472 1161 756 1545"> <p data-bbox="516 1165 732 1190"><b>Forward-facing</b></p>  </div> </div>	<p data-bbox="834 1110 1117 1211">Continues to protect toddler with a built-in harness.</p>	<p data-bbox="1209 1110 1511 1173"><b>Rear-facing or forward-facing.</b></p> <p data-bbox="1209 1184 1511 1514">Rear-facing, these seats usually last until a child is 30-35 pounds. Forward-facing, a convertible seat can be used until the child reaches 40 or more pounds, depending on the car seat brand.</p>
<p data-bbox="310 1606 565 1631"><b>Combination seat</b></p> 	<p data-bbox="834 1606 1154 1936">For little kids, this seat has a built-in harness. Later, at 4 years of age and beyond 40 pounds, the harness can be removed. The seat is then used with the vehicle's seat belt as a "booster."</p>	<p data-bbox="1209 1606 1511 1631"><b>Forward-facing ONLY.</b></p> <p data-bbox="1209 1642 1511 1866">Usually cannot be used as a "booster" with the vehicle's seat belt until the child is at least 40 pounds and 4 years old.</p>