

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Updates Recommendations on Car Seats for Children

Riding in a car remains one of the most dangerous things our children do every day. Using the right car seat or booster seat lowers the risk of death or serious injury by 70%!

New guidelines recommend that children remain rear-facing until they outgrow either the weight or height allowed by their specific car seat. This is a change from the recommendation that previously had children switch to forward-facing at 2 years of age. The AAP recommendations are summarized below.

The AAP recommends:

- Infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for 2 years or more.
- Once they are facing forward, children should use a forward-facing car safety seat with a harness for as long as possible, until they reach the height and weight limits for their seats. Many seats can accommodate children up to 65 pounds or more.
- When children exceed these limits, they should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's lap and shoulder seat belt fits properly. This is often when they have reached at least 4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8 to 12 years old.
- When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use lap and shoulder seat belts for optimal protection.
- All children younger than 13 years should be restrained in the rear seats of vehicles for optimal protection.

Here are some links to additional resources about car seat safety

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats#inspection-inspection>

<https://healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/How-long-should-my-child-ride-rear-facing.aspx>