

Child Seat Safety

According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), traffic crashes are the leading cause of death and disability for children nationwide. Car seats are 71 percent effective in reducing infant fatalities, 54 percent effective in reducing toddler fatalities and 67 percent effective in reducing the need for hospitalization.

Frequently asked questions

1. What is Kentucky's car seat law?

Children less than 40 inches must be properly installed in a car seat.

2. What is Kentucky's booster seat law?

Children younger than 8 years old and between 40 and 57 inches must be in a booster. Children younger than 8 but taller than 57 inches do not have to ride in a booster seat.

3. When can my child go forward-facing?

A child must be kept rear-facing to a minimum of one year of age and 20 pounds, with best practice being two years of age and 30 pounds.

When using a convertible seat, it is best to keep the child rear-facing until the maximum rear-facing weight limit (read instructions or seat label).

4. Which slots should I use for the harness straps?

When rear-facing, the harness straps should be *at or below* the child's shoulders

When forward-facing, the harness straps should be *at or above* the child's shoulders

5. What is the clip located on the harness strap?

This is called the retainer clip and should be kept at armpit level. This enables the harness to stay in the proper position.

6. How tight should the harness straps be on the child?

The straps must be snug against the child's shoulders so you cannot pinch any excess webbing.

7. How tight should my child seat be in the vehicle?

The seat should not move more than one inch side-to-side or back-and-forth when pulling at the belt path.

8. How do I know if my car seat needs to be replaced?

If the seat is older than six years or has exceeded the manufacturer's expiration date, it must be replaced. If the seat has been involved in a crash, it should be replaced. First check with your insurance company before purchasing a new seat. Using a seat with unknown history is not recommended.

9. When can my child sit in the front seat?

The risk of injury is greater for children in the front seat, with or without an airbag. Research shows it is best for children age 12 and under to always ride in the back seat.

10. Where can I get my car seat checked?

Contact [SAFE KIDS Fayette County](#) for sites in Lexington or [SAFE KIDS Louisville](#) for sites in Louisville and Shelbyville. Other sites: Contact your local fire station, police department, health department or other safety-related agency.



Types of child safety seats

Infant seat

- Use rear-facing, from birth until weight limit (read instructions or seat label).
- A child must remain rear-facing to a minimum of one year of age **and** 20 pounds, with best practice being two years of age **and** 30 pounds.



Convertible seat

- May be used both rear-facing and forward-facing.
- Use rear-facing until weight limit (read instructions or seat label).
- A child must remain rear-facing to a minimum of one year of age **and** 20 pounds, with best practice being two years of age **and** 30 pounds.
- Use forward-facing until weight limit on harness or until the child outgrows the harness slots.

Forward-facing seat with harness

- For children at least one year of age **and** 20 pounds, with best practice being two years of age **and** 30 pounds.
- Keep child in harness until weight limit or until the child outgrows the harness slots.

Combination forward-facing seat with harness/booster

- Use harness for children at least one year of age **and** 20 pounds, with best practice being two years of age **and** 30 pounds.
- Keep child in harness until weight limit (read instructions or seat label).
- Remove harness and use as a booster until weight limit (read instructions or seat label).

Booster seat

- Use with children under age 8 and under 57 inches (read booster law on front page).
- Best practice is for child to be at least 40 pounds before using a booster.
- Must be used with a lap-and-shoulder belt.

When can my child safely use a seat belt?

1. Can your child sit straight against the back of the vehicle seat?
2. Can your child's legs bend at the knee on the edge of the vehicle seat?
3. Can your child sit comfortably in the vehicle seat without slouching?
4. Does the lap portion of the seat belt sit down on your child's hips, touching the thighs?
5. Does the shoulder belt stay at the center of your child's shoulder, crossing the collarbone?

If you answered YES to ALL FIVE questions, your child is ready to use a seat belt.

For additional information:

- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP): www.chop.edu
- SAFE KIDS Coalition: www.usa.safekids.org
- Safety Belt Safe USA: www.carseat.org

