

## The Basic Types of Child Safety Restraint Seats

Making vehicles safe for infants and young children can be a bit challenging. While most adults and teens can simply rely on seat belts, shoulder harnesses and airbags for protection, younger children require careful positioning in car safety seats before riding as passengers.

Whether you're someone who regularly or just occasionally takes care of young children, you can probably still benefit from reading the following brief review of the most basic types of car safety seats currently available.

### Basic Types of Infant/Child Safety Seats

- **Seats Designed Exclusively for Infants.** The package labels on these seats should clearly indicate the ages of the young infants who can benefit the most from them. These types of seats are easily recognized since they're both small and designed to keep your child facing the car seat, as opposed to the front dashboard. Most of them come with a base and an easily removable seat with a carrying handle. Caregivers are usually told to keep using this type of seat until their child weighs close to 20 pounds and has reached his or her first birthday. Ask the seller about what's known as the car LATCH system to determine if a particular seat is well suited to your car. *Basic Warning:* Never place one of these in the front car seat since an infant can suffer serious injuries when a passenger airbag deploys.
- **The Forward-Facing Child Seat.** As its name indicates, children placed in these types of safety seats sit looking towards the vehicle's dashboard. Its easily distinguished from an infant seat since it positions the child in a more upright position than an infant seat. Usually, these seats include harnesses that snap across children's chests and mid sections. They are intended for children between the ages of one and four who weight 20 pounds or more.

- **Booster Seats.** These come in a variety of models including “high back ones,” “backless ones” and a combination “booster seat and forward-facing seat.” This latter model makes it possible to remove the harness and replace it with a carefully positioned seatbelt.

When you’re driving and carrying infants or other children in your car, make sure that all of the following car safety rules are followed:

- Every passenger must be either wearing their own individual seatbelt and shoulder harness or be placed in an appropriate car seat;
- Adults should never be allowed to hold any young children on their laps. (Children must always be placed in appropriate car seats). Nursing mothers should either carry adequate bottles along to feed their children or directly feed them just before starting out on a journey or upon reaching their destinations);
- All child car seats must be placed in the back seats whenever there’s a passenger side airbag in the front seat. If for any reason you don’t know if there’s a functional airbag in the front seat, be cautious and place the child’s car seat in the back seat;
- Once children are too big to sit in any kind of car seat, make sure they wear *both* shoulder harnesses and seat belts. If they’re not required to wear both, they’re much more likely to sustain greater abdominal injuries than their young bodies can handle.

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