Steps to Safety
A Buckle Up Checklist

There are many car seat choices on the market. Use the best practice information below to help you choose the type of car seat that best meets your child's needs.

Select a car seat based on your child's age and size, choosing a seat that fits in your vehicle, so that it is fitted correctly every time.

Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions and read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat.

Birth-3 years Rear-Facing Car Seat

Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether.

Selection
- ❑ Rear-facing-only seat or rear-facing convertible

Direction
- ❑ Recline seat and face the back of the car. Don't worry about feet touching the vehicle seat back.

Location
- ❑ Install in the back seat.
- ❑ Never place in front of an airbag.

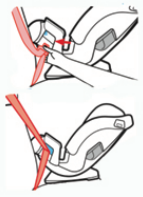
Adjust Harness
- ❑ Place harness straps at or below shoulder level.
- ❑ Check harness instructions and adjust buckle straps carefully, if needed.

Installing your seat
- ❑ Put belt or lower anchors through rear -facing belt path on seat or infant seat base.
- ❑ Buckle, lock, and tighten the belt OR attach lower anchor straps and tighten.
- ❑ Check angle of seat. Head should not flop and there should be one inch of plastic above head.
- ❑ Check tightness of seat at belt path. It should move no more than 1 inch.

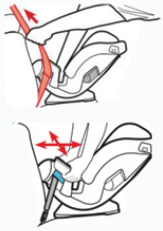
Buckling up your child
- ❑ Add or remove padding as allowed by manufacturer (check weight limits).
- ❑ Buckle harness at crotch.
- ❑ Tighten harness until snug while ensuring clip is armpit level.
- ❑ Harness straps should be at or just below shoulder level.

How to Lock Your Safety Belt

- ❑ Find the safety belt path on the safety seat for rear facing. (Check instructions.)
- ❑ Thread the belt through the belt path and buckle it.
- ❑ Slowly pull the belt all the way out at the top, then feed it back in a little. If you can't pull it out again, the belt is now locked.



- ❑ Press the safety seat into the vehicle seat. Tighten the belt by feeding all the slack back into the top.
- ❑ Check seat is tightly installed. Pull to side and front above the belt path. Seat should not move more than 1 inch.



** Attaching the lower connectors

- ❑ Attach connectors to lower bars in vehicle. Tighten.

1-6 Years Forward-Facing Car Seat

There are many car seat choices on the market. Use these best practices to choose the type that best meets your child's needs. Select a car seat based on your child's age and size, that fits in your vehicle, so that it is fitted correctly every time. To ensure proper installation, always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions and your vehicle owner's manual.

Selection

- ❑ Forward-facing seat with harness. Most fit up to 50-80 lbs.

Direction

- ❑ Install in upright position, facing front of the car.

Location

- ❑ Install in the back seat.
- ❑ May install in the front only if all rear seats are occupied by other children. Move vehicle seat as far back as possible.

Adjust harness

- ❑ Place harness straps at or above shoulder level.
- ❑ Move buckle strap, if necessary.
- ❑ Consideration should be given to airbag locations.

Installing your seat

- ❑ Put belt through forward-facing belt path OR put lower connector strap through forward-facing belt path.
- ❑ Buckle, lock and tighten the belt OR attach lower connector strap to anchors and tighten.
- ❑ Check angle of seat: Upright, or reclined if manufacturer allows.
- ❑ Check tightness – seat should move less than one inch to sides or front of car.
- ❑ Attach tether strap to anchor.

Buckling up your child

- ❑ Add or remove padding – check weight limits.
- ❑ Buckle harness at crotch.
- ❑ Tighten harness until snug; do the pinch test.
- ❑ Chest clip at armpit level.
- ❑ Check harness straps at or above shoulder level.

4-12 Years Booster Seat

Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly, the seat belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember: your child should still ride in the back seat because it's safer there.

Selection

- ❑ Highback booster
- ❑ Backless booster seat (with car head restraint)
- ❑ Never use without head restraint.

Direction

- ❑ Facing front of the car

Location

- ❑ Back seat of car

Installation

- ❑ Use shoulder-lap belt to buckle up child.
- ❑ Read instructions to learn how to route belt correctly.
- ❑ Never use without lap belt.

For more information, email injuryprevention@msdh.ms.gov, visit msdh.ms.gov/saferiders or call 601-206-1010.

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