Forward-Facing Only Child Safety Seat

Child passenger safety seats It is best to keep children rear-facing until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the seat manufacturer. A child should ride in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until they outgrow it. There are several kinds of car seats that can be used forward-facing:

- **Convertible seats** - seats that can be switched from rear-facing to forward-facing.
- **Forward-facing toddler seats** - used with a harness for children who weigh up to 40 to 80 pounds (depending on the model).
- **Combination forward-facing/booster seats** - depending on the model - used with a harness for children who weigh up to 40 to 65 pounds or with no harness as a booster (up to 80 to 120 pounds).
- **Built-in forward-facing seats** - come built in on some vehicles. Weight and height limits vary. Check the vehicle owner's manual or contact the manufacturer for information about how to use these seats.

PROPERLY RESTRAINED CHILD IN A FORWARD-FACING ONLY SEAT:

- Harness straps should fit at or above child's shoulders.
- Place chest clip, if available, across the chest at armpit level to keep harness straps in place.
- Keep harness straps snug.
- Child safety seat should not move more than an inch forward or sideways.

TIPS FOR PROPER INSTALLATION OF A FORWARD-FACING ONLY SEAT

- Always read your child safety seat instructions and vehicle's owner's manual for proper use and installation information.
- Many laws require all children to ride in the rear seat of a vehicle whenever possible.
- Air bags can cause serious head and neck injury or death in children, especially those in rear-facing car seats or children not properly positioned in a car seat. If it is necessary for a child under the age of 12 years to ride in the front seat:
  - Use a forward-facing car safety seat with a harness.
  - Move the car's seat back from the dashboard (and the air bag) as far as you can.
  - Consider turning off the air bag if this is going to be a long term solution.
- Check for information on common car seat/vehicle compatibility problems that make installation difficult.
- Know what kind of seat belt system is in your vehicle and how to lock it to secure the child safety seat. Locking the seat belt is what will hold your child safety seat in place.
- Adjust the seat angle according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Identify the belt path on the seat. Be sure the seat belt runs through the belt path. (Some of these seats have reverse belt paths; read instructions carefully).
- Place the vehicle belt through the belt path and buckle.
- Put your body weight into the child safety seat (stand in front of seat and put one knee in seat), then pull the excess belt webbing of a lap only belt or the shoulder belt portion of a lap/shoulder belt away from the buckle, taking out as much slack at possible.

- Activate the locking mechanism (click the tab into the buckle).
- Check for secure fit by placing your hands on the child safety seat at the base, near the belt path, and pull.
- Use locking clips on your car's seat belts if needed (see car's owner manual).
- Cars made after 2002 may have a system (called LATCH) for securing car safety seats.

These guidelines are based on those created by the American Academy of Pediatrics concerning child auto safety. Laws and regulations regarding child auto safety vary from state to state.

NHTSA recommends that child safety seats be replaced following a moderate or severe crash in order to ensure a continued high level of crash protection for child passengers.

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