

Keep your kids properly secured while traveling

September 26 2011, By Shannon Kearns

Child Passenger Safety Week is celebrated every year to remind parents and other caregivers of the need to keep children of all ages properly restrained in a seat that meets their weight and height requirements.

Children grow at different rates, and restraints should be checked frequently to ensure safety. Families should have their child seat checked as a child grows to be sure they are using the right restraint: a car seat, a booster seat or a seat belt. When it comes to the safety of a child, there is no room for mistakes. To make sure a child is secured correctly, go to a car seat safety check in an area near you by visiting www.safekids.org/in-your-area .

Also, [parents](#) and [caregivers](#) should follow a few basic guidelines to determine which restraint system is best suited to protect their [children](#) in a vehicle:

- For the best possible protection keep infants in a back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible -- up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. Never turn a child forward-facing before age 1 and at least 20 pounds, although keeping kids rear-facing until at least age 2 is safer and preferred if the seat allows.

- When children outgrow their rear-facing seats, they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in a back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular harnessed seat. Many newer seats exceed the old 40 pound weight limit.

-- Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats, they should ride in booster seats, in a back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly.

-- Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt rests on the shoulder or collar bone (usually when the child is between 8 and 12 years old, approximately 4'9" tall and 80 to 100 pounds).

For more information on [car seat safety](#) or other ways to help keep your child safe in the car, or for questions, contact the Pediatric Trauma Injury Prevention Program at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, at 717-531-SAFE.

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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