

# CAR SEAT SAFETY

## CHOOSING:

- Make sure the car seat is the right seat for your child's age, height and weight.
- Infants and toddlers should be in a rear-facing car seat until they are at least 2 years old or until they reach the highest weight or height limit for their car seat. This provides the most protection for their head, neck and spine.
- For most children, forward-facing car seats can be used from age 2 until the child is at least 4 years old. Many forward-facing seats with harnesses can go up to 65 pounds or more.
- Do not move children into a booster seat until they have outgrown the forward-facing seat.
- If you need to borrow or buy a used car seat make sure that it is age-, height- and weight-appropriate, has NOT expired, been recalled or been in an accident.

## INSTALLING:

- Before installing, read the car seat manufacturer's instructions, as well as your car's owner's manual.
- Both rear-facing and forward-facing seats should be placed in the back seat. Children under the age of 13 should ride in the back seat, away from the front seat air bags.
- Lock the seat in place using either the car's seat belt locking feature or the car's lower anchors attachments. Do not use both the seat belt and the lower anchors unless the car seat manufacturer allows it. You should choose the method that gives you the best fit, but be sure to use the seatbelt if the weight of your child and car seat exceeds 65 pounds.
- The car seat should be attached tightly and not move more than an inch from side-to-side or front-to-back. Make sure to connect and tighten the car seat's tether to the tether anchor attachment in the car.
- When your child is in the seat, the chest clip should be at armpit level and the harness straps should fit snugly around him. To make sure the straps are tight enough, pinch the strap an inch below your child's shoulder between your thumb and index finger. If there is excess, you need to tighten the straps.

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### MAINTAINING:

- Car seats DO expire. Find and double-check the label, to make sure it is still safe to use.
- Replace car seats that have cracks, missing pieces, straps that are worn out, or have been involved in an accident.

### OTHER TIPS:

- Never leave your child alone in the car. Temperatures inside the car can rise quickly when it is warm outside, and heatstroke can set in within minutes.
- Do not attach anything to the car seat that did not come with the seat, like mirrors or toys.
- Make sure any toys that are brought into the car are soft, and will not injure your child. Before traveling, secure all loose objects and toys to protect everyone in the car.

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