

Secure your most precious cargo.



Make sure every ride is a safe ride for your child.

Whether you're taking a short trip to the grocery store or hitting the road for a family vacation, you know how important it is to have your child safe and secure in a car seat. However, your child may still be riding at risk, because four out of five car seats are not being used properly.

The truth is that using a car seat can be confusing. As children grow, how they ride in your vehicle needs to change to prevent injury. At each stage, you need to choose the right type of seat for your child, install it in your vehicle properly, and then buckle your child in it correctly.

It's a lot to remember, but the Office of Highway Safety is here to help. In this brochure, you'll find a detailed explanation of child passenger safety, including how to schedule a free inspection of your car seat by a Child Passenger Safety Technician.

Please take a few minutes to make sure your child is as safe as possible.

IS YOUR CHILD RIDING AT RISK?

Four out of five car seats are not being used properly.

 **BUCKLE UP. ARRIVE ALIVE DE**

UNDERSTANDING THE 4 STAGES OF CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY

1. Infants



A child from birth to age 2:

- Always rides in a rear-facing car seat.
- Always rides in the back seat.
- Must be in a size-appropriate infant or convertible car seat.
- Must have harness straps pulled snugly against the body, and the straps should come through slots that are located **at or below the shoulders**.
- Must have their car seat reclined at the proper angle indicated by the car seat manufacturer.

2. Toddlers



A child age 2 to 4:

- Always rides in the back seat.
- Should ride in a rear-facing car seat (convertible seat) until child reaches the maximum height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer. Once child reaches the rear-facing height or weight limit, they are ready to ride in a forward-facing car seat with a harness.
- Must have harness straps pulled snugly against the body, and when child is facing forward, the straps should come through slots that are located **at or above the shoulders**.

3. Young Kids



A child age 4 to 8:

- Always rides in the back seat.
- Always rides in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until they reach the maximum height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer.
- Can ride in a booster seat once they outgrow the forward-facing car seat with a harness.
- Must be secured in a booster seat by a lap and shoulder belt (cannot use a booster seat with lap-only belt).
- Is too tall for a booster seat when their ears rise above the seat frame.

4. Older Kids



A child age 8 to 12:

- Always rides in the back seat.
- Rides in a booster seat until reaching the height or weight maximum allowed by the booster seat manufacturer.
- Must be secured by a lap and shoulder belt when riding in a booster seat or using the seat belt alone.
- Wears the lap belt on the hips, not the stomach.
- Wears the shoulder belt on the shoulder, not the neck, and never puts shoulder belt behind back or under arm.

Heat Stroke

At all stages, children should never be left unattended in a vehicle. Even on mild or cloudy days, temperatures inside vehicles can reach life-threatening levels. Leaving windows cracked doesn't help. Check your back seat for children every time you exit your vehicle. It could save a life.

Restraint Types



1 A REAR-FACING CAR SEAT is the best car seat for your young child to use. It has a harness, and in a crash, it cradles and moves with your child to reduce the stress to the child's fragile neck and spinal cord.

2 A FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT has a harness and tether that limit your child's forward movement during a crash.

Delaware Child Restraint Laws

- Children under age 2 and under 30 pounds must be seated in a rear-facing car seat with a five-point harness.
- Children under age 4 and under 40 pounds must be seated in either a forward-facing or rear-facing car seat with a five-point harness.
- Children between the ages of 4 and 16 must be seated in a booster seat up to the manufacturer's listed height or weight maximum and then in a seat belt.
- A first offense will result in a referral to a Delaware Office of Highway Safety Car Seat Fitting Station. Any subsequent offense will result in a \$25 fine.

We'll help your child ride safely.

To ensure your child's safety, the Office of Highway Safety will check your car seat for free. Contact your nearest fitting station for an appointment today.

New Castle County

Wilmington DMV
Rt. 13 South in New Castle
Call or text 302-256-1123 for an appointment.

Kent County

Dover DMV
Rt. 113 South in Dover
Call or text 302-387-2324 for an appointment.

Sussex County

Call or text 302-242-7107 for an appointment.
Location to be determined during scheduling.

For more information on child passenger safety, including tips on car seat installation, visit www.ohs.delaware.gov or ArriveAliveDE.com/Secure-The-Kids.

3 A BOOSTER SEAT allows the seat belt to fit properly over the strongest parts of your child's body.

4 A SEAT BELT should lie across the upper thighs and be snug across the shoulder and chest to restrain the child safely in a crash. It should not rest on the stomach area or across the neck.