



May 29 to June 4, 2023

#KidsInTheRightSeat

[parachute.ca/SafeKidsWeek](http://parachute.ca/SafeKidsWeek)



## Backgrounder

Parachute Safe Kids Week is an annual awareness campaign designed to bring attention to predictable and preventable injuries in children. Parachute celebrates Safe Kids Week May 29 to June 4, 2023, with the theme of child passenger safety.

Car crashes are a leading cause of death and injury to children in Canada. Children are well protected and less likely to be severely injured when the right car seat, booster seat or seat belt is used on every ride. Using the right car seat in the right way can reduce the risk of injury by up to 82 per cent and risk of death by up to 71 per cent.

When installed and used correctly, car seats save lives. A Canadian roadside study found that 99 per cent of kids were buckled, but 73 per cent of car seats were used or installed incorrectly, 30 per cent of kids in booster seats did not meet the legal weight minimum and 52 per cent of kids in seat belts did not fit safely without a booster seat.

### Is your child in the right seat?

- **Is your seat safe to use?** Choose a seat that has the National Safety Mark, indicating that it meets Canadian standards for safety. If your seat was previously used, check your seat to make sure that it has not expired, is not recalled and that all of its parts (including the instruction manual) are present and in good working order.
- **Does the seat fit your child?** Choose the car seat or booster seat that fits your child's age, weight, height and development. You can find this information on the labels on the seat as well as in the instruction manual.
- **Does the seat fit your vehicle?** Not all car seats and booster seats fit safely in all vehicles. Ensure the seat can be correctly installed in your vehicle.



## When can you safely transition your child to the next seat?

Canadian injury prevention organizations and child passenger safety advocates make recommendations based on current research and information. Don't rush through the stages. Keep children in each stage for longer and in a seat that fits them.

### Rear-facing car seat

- A rear-facing car seat provides the best protection for your child's head, neck, and spine in a sudden stop or crash.
- All infants must use a rear-facing seat.
- Use a rear-facing-only car seat or a larger, rear-facing convertible seat; either is safe as long as your child fits correctly.
- Your child is safest riding rear facing until 2, 3 or even 4 years old.
- Keep your child rear facing for as long as they still fit the larger, rear-facing seat.

### Forward-facing car seat

- A forward-facing seat uses a five-point harness to spread the force of a sudden stop or crash over the strongest parts of your child's body.
- Start using a forward-facing seat with a five-point harness when your child has outgrown their larger, rear-facing seat. This usually happens between ages 2 to 4.
- Keep your child in a forward-facing seat with a five-point harness until your child weighs at least 18 kg (40 lbs) and is able to sit correctly in a booster seat. This may be at 4, 5, 6 or even 7 years old.
- If the child outgrows their forward-facing seat before they are ready to move to a booster seat, you will need a seat with a 5-point harness that will hold a taller, heavier child.

### Booster seat

- A booster seat positions your child so that the adult seat belt fits safely across their strongest bones and away from their soft belly.
- Your child must weigh at least 18 kg (40 pounds) to use a booster seat.

- Your child must also be able to sit straight and tall for the whole ride, without moving around or unbuckling. This usually happens between ages 4 and 7.
- Keep using a booster seat until your child is at least 145 cm (4 feet 9 inches) tall and fits the adult seat belt correctly.

## Seat belt

- The adult seat belt must fit properly over the child's strongest bones to protect a child.
- Once a child is taller than 145 cm (4 feet 9 inches), they may begin to safely fit the adult seat belt. This usually happens between age 10 to 12.
- Use the five-step test to see if your child can safely move from a booster seat to a seat belt:
  - Can your child sit all the way back against the vehicle seat?
  - Do your child's knees bend comfortably over the edge of the vehicle seat without slouching?
  - Does the lap belt stay low and snug across their hip bones?
  - Does the shoulder belt cross your child's chest and stay between their neck and shoulder?
  - Can your child sit like this for the entire ride without slouching?
- Until your child can meet all five steps, keep using a booster seat.
- Your child might fit the adult seat belt in one vehicle, but still need a booster seat in another.

## Child passenger safety basics

- Properly use a car seat, booster, or seat belt on every ride, even in a taxi or a ride-share vehicle.
- It's important not to rush your child into the next stage before they are ready.
- Children under the age of 13 are safest in the back seat.

## Four tips for every trip

- **Make sure your child's harness is snug.**  
Tighten the harness until you cannot pinch any slack at the shoulder. Place the chest clip at armpit level. Make sure the harness straps are in the correct slot for their direction (at or below the shoulders when rear facing; at or above the shoulders when forward facing).
- **Install your seat tight to the vehicle.**  
Attach the seat to your vehicle using the lower anchors or seat belt and tighten. If you are using the seat belt, it must be locked so that it stays tight. The seat should move less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) where it is attached to the car.
- **Make sure the angle is correct for a rear-facing seat.**  
Always follow the angle indicator on the car seat. Some car seats have a range of recline angles. If the car seat is for a newborn, adjust the seat to the most reclined angle allowed.
- **Always use the top tether on a forward-facing seat.**  
Check your vehicle manual to find out where the tether anchors are located. The tether reduces how far your child's head moves in a crash to prevent serious injury. This tether is required for all forward-facing seats in Canada.

## If you need more help, where can you find it?

Child Passenger Safety Technicians receive standardized, professional training through the Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada. Find a technician near you: <https://www.cpsac.org/find-a-tech/>

Contact the manufacturer of the car seat or booster seat for customer support, including video chat installation help. <https://www.cpsac.org/caregiver-resources/#1618931286082-82301946-57a6>

**For more information, visit**  
**[parachute.ca/safekidsweek](https://parachute.ca/safekidsweek)**