



ANDORRA PEDIATRICS

8945 RIDGE AVENUE
SUITE 3-4-5-9-10
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19128
215-483-8558

Pennsylvania Car Seat Requirements for a Safe Ride

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Type of Seat</u>	<u>General Guidelines</u>
<u>Infants</u> & <u>Toddlers</u>	1. Rear Facing ONLY 2. Rear-facing Convertible	All infants and toddlers must ride in a <i>rear facing seat until they are at least 2 years of age</i> or reach the highest weight or height allowed by their care seat manufacturer
<u>Toddlers</u> & <u>Preschoolers</u>	1. Convertible 2. Forward-Facing with harness	Children who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their convertible car seat <i>must use a forward-facing car seat with a harness for as long as possible</i> , up to the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety set manufacturer
<u>School-Aged</u> <u>Children</u>	Booster Seats	All children whose weight/height exceeds the forward-facing limit for their car safety seat must use a <i>Belt-Positioning Booster Seat</i> *** <u>Children must remain in a Booster seat until they have reached a height of 4 feet 9 inches (57") and are 8 through 12 years of age.</u> ***

Older Children

Seat Belts

When children are old enough for the vehicle seat belt to fit them correctly, they should always use a Lap and Shoulder Seat Belt for the best protection. *Never place shoulder strap under your arm.*

All children younger than 13 years must ride in the back seat using the Lap and Shoulder Seat Belt.

Rear-Facing Car Seats for Infants & Toddlers



The AAP recommends that all infants ride rear facing starting with their first ride home from the hospital. All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing seat until they are at least 2 years of age or, preferably, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat manufacturer. All parents can benefit from getting installation help from a CPST to ensure that their seat is properly installed.

Types of Rear-Facing Seats:

Three types of rear-facing seats are available: rear-facing-only, convertible, and 3-in-1. When children reach the highest weight or length allowed by the manufacturer of their rear-facing-only seat, they should continue to ride rear-facing in a convertible or 3-in-1 seat.

Rear-facing-only seats

- Are used for infants up to 22 to 40 pounds, depending on the model.
- Are small and have carrying handles.
- Usually come with a base that can be left in the car. The seat clicks into and out of the base so you don't have to install it each time you use it. Parents can buy more than one base for additional vehicles.
- Should be used only for travel (not sleeping, feeding, or any other use outside the vehicle).

Convertible seats (used rear facing)

- Can be used rear facing and, later, converted to forward-facing for older children when they outgrow the weight limit, the length limit, or both for rear facing. This means the seat can be used longer by your child. They are bulkier than infant seats, however, and do not come with carrying handles or separate bases are designed to stay in the car.
- Many have higher limits in rear-facing weight (up to 40–50 pounds) and height than rear-facing–only seats, which make them ideal for bigger babies and toddlers.
- Have a 5-point harness that attaches at the shoulders, at the hips, and between the legs.
- Should be used only for travel (not sleeping, feeding, or any other use outside the vehicle).

3-in-1 seats (used rear facing)

- Can be used rear facing, forward facing, or as a belt-positioning booster. This means the seat may be used longer by your child as your child grows.
- Are often bigger in size, so it is important to check that they fit in the vehicle while rear facing.
- Do not have the convenience of a carrying handle or separate base; however, they may have higher limits in rear-facing weight (up to 40–50 pounds) and height than rear-facing–only seats, which make them ideal for bigger babies and toddlers.

Forward-Facing Car Seats for Toddlers & Preschoolers



Always read the vehicle owner's manual and the car seat manual before installing the seat. Any child who has outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for his convertible seat should use a forward-facing seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by his car seat manufacturer. It is best for children to ride in a seat with a harness as long as possible, at least to 4 years of age. If your child outgrows a seat before reaching 4 years of age, consider using a seat with a harness approved for higher weights and heights.

Types of Forward-Facing Car Seat Restraints:

Five types of car safety restraints can be used forward facing:

- **Convertible seats:** Seats can convert from rear-facing to forward-facing. These include 3-in-1 seats.
- **Forward-facing-only seats:** Seats can be used forward facing with a harness for children who weigh up to 40 to 80 pounds (depending on the model). Although manufacturers are not currently making any forward-facing-only seats, many remain in use from previous years.
- **Combination seats with harness:** Seats can be used forward facing with a harness for children who weigh up to 40 to 90 pounds (depending on the model) or without the harness as a booster (up to 80–120 pounds, depending on the model).
- **Built-in seats:** Some vehicles come with built-in forward-facing seats. Weight and height limits vary. However, do not use built-in seats until your child is at least 2 years of age. Read your vehicle owner's manual for details about how to use these seats.
- **Travel vests:** Vests can be worn by children between 20 and 168 pounds and can be an option to traditional forward-facing seats. They are useful for when a vehicle has lap-only seat belts in the rear, for children with certain special needs, or for children whose weight has exceeded that allowed by car seats. These vests may require use of a top tether.

Booster Seats for School-Aged Children



Booster seats are for older children who have outgrown their forward-facing seats. All children whose weight or height exceeds the forward-facing limit for their car seat should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached **4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8 through 12 years of age**. Most children will not fit in most vehicle seatbelts without a booster until 10 to 11 years of age. **All children younger than 13 should ride in the back seat.**

Instructions that come with your car seat will tell you the height and weight limits for the seat. **As a general guideline, a child has outgrown a forward-facing seat when any of the following situations is true:**

- He reaches the top weight or height allowed for his seat with a harness. (These limits are listed on the seat and also included in the instruction booklet).
- His shoulders are above the top harness slots.
- The tops of his ears have reached the top of the seat.

Types of Booster Seats:

High-back and backless are 2 standard types of booster seats. They do not come with harness straps but are used with lap and shoulder seat belts in your vehicle, the same way an adult rides. They are designed to raise a child up so that lap and shoulder seat belts fit properly over the strongest parts of the child's body.

Most booster seats are not secured to the vehicle seat with the seat belt or lower anchor and tether but simply rest on the vehicle seat and are held in place once the seat belt is fastened over a child. However, some models of booster seats can be secured to the vehicle seat and kept in place using the lower anchors or top tether. (Currently, only a few vehicle manufacturers offer built-in booster seats)

Seat Belts for Older Children & Adults



Seat belts are made for adults. Children should stay in a booster seat until adult seat belts fit correctly, typically when children reach about **4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8 through 12 years of age**. Most children will not fit in a seat belt alone until 10 to 11 years of age. When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use lap and shoulder seat belts for the best protection. All children younger than 13 years should ride in the back seat.

Using a Seat Belt:

An adult seat belt fits correctly when:

- The shoulder belt lies across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not the neck or throat.
- The lap belt is low and snug across the upper thighs, not the belly.
- Your child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with her knees bent over the edge of the seat without slouching and can comfortably stay in this position throughout the trip.

Other points to keep in mind when using seat belts include:

- Make sure your child does not tuck the shoulder belt under her arm or behind her back. This leaves the upper body unprotected and adds extra slack to the seat belt system, putting your child at risk of severe injury in a crash or with sudden braking.
- Never allow anyone to share seat belts. All passengers must have their own car seats or seat belts.