

Toddlers and preschoolers-forward-facing CAR SEAT SAFETY

Once your child is at least 1 year of age *and* weighs at least 20 pounds, she can ride forward-facing. However, it is best for her to ride rear-facing to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of her car safety seat. She should ride in a forward-facing seat with a harness until she outgrows it (usually at around 4 years of age and about 40 pounds).

There are 5 types of car safety seats that can be used forward-facing.

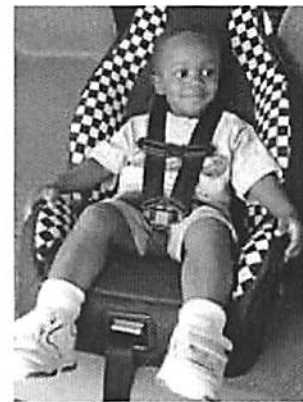
- **Convertible seats**—seats that “convert” from rear-facing to forward-facing seats.
- **Forward-facing toddler seats**—these seats can be used forward-facing with a harness for children who weigh up to 40 to 80 pounds (depending on the model).
- **Combination forward-facing/booster seats**—these seats can be used forward-facing with a harness for children who weigh up to 40 to 65 pounds (depending on the model) or without the harness as a booster (up to 80 to 100 pounds).
- **Built-in seats**—some vehicles come with forward-facing seats built in. Weight and height limits vary. Read your vehicle owner’s manual or contact the manufacturer for details about how to use these seats.
- **Travel vests**—these can be worn by children between 20 and 168 pounds and can be an alternative to traditional forward-facing seats. They are also useful for when a vehicle has lap-only seat belts in the rear.

Installation tips for forward-facing seats

Make sure the car safety seat is installed tightly in the vehicle and that the harness fits the child snugly.

To switch a convertible seat from rear-facing to forward-facing,

- Move the shoulder straps to the slots that are at or above your child’s shoulders. On some convertible seats, the top harness slots must be used when facing forward. Check the instructions that came with the seat to be sure.
- You may have to adjust the recline angle of the seat. Check the instructions to be sure.
- Make sure the seat belt runs through the forward-facing belt path. When making these changes, always follow the car safety seat instructions.
- If your vehicle was made after 2002, it should come with the LATCH system, which is used to secure car safety seats. See below for information on using LATCH.



Forward-facing seat

A **tether** is a strap that attaches to the top of a car safety seat and to an anchor point in your vehicle (see your owner’s manual to find where the tether anchors are in your vehicle). Tethers give extra protection by keeping the car safety seat and the child’s head from moving too far forward in a crash or sudden stop. All new cars, minivans, and light trucks have been required to have tether anchors since September 2000. New forward-facing car safety seats come with tethers. For older seats, tether kits are available. Check with the car safety seat manufacturer to find out how you can get a tether if your seat does not have one.

Methodist HealthCare Buckle-up Baby Program 210-575-0355

North Central Baptist Hospital 21-297-7005