

# CAR SEAT INSTALLATION CHECKLIST

## For rear-facing and forward-facing car seats

### ☐ Get the right car seat.

Make sure you're using the right car seat for your child's age, weight, **and** height. Read your car seat's instructions for size limits.

### ☐ Register your seat right away.

This is so the manufacturer can notify you in the event of a safety recall. Mail in the registration card that came with the seat, or go to [www.safercar.gov/parents/Car-Seat-Recalls-Registration.htm](http://www.safercar.gov/parents/Car-Seat-Recalls-Registration.htm).

### ☐ Read the instructions.

The instructions for both your vehicle **and** the car seat will help you install the seat correctly.

### ☐ Install your car seat correctly.

Make sure your seat is:

- ☐ **In the back seat.** All children under age 13 should ride in the back seat, so install car seats in the back seat whenever possible.
  - ☐ Never install a rear-facing car seat in front of an active passenger seat air bag; it can cause severe injury or death to rear-facing infants.
- ☐ **Facing the correct direction.** Remember to keep your child rear-facing as long as allowed by the car seat manufacturer. Don't hurry to turn your child forward-facing, as research shows that young child passengers are safest when riding rear-facing.
- ☐ **Reclined at the correct angle.** Some seats have an adjustable recline feature. Check your car seat manufacturer's instructions to be sure your car seat is properly reclined.
- ☐ **Installed using either the seat belt or lower anchors.** Remove twists or slack from the seat belt or lower anchor straps, and check your car seat manual to make sure you've threaded the seat belt or lower anchor straps through the correct path on the car seat. Note: some seats have two separate paths. If you use a seat belt, make sure the belt is "locked." Some car seats have a "lock-off" feature that holds the seat belt in place. For a forward-facing car seat, connect the seat's tether strap (located on the top of the seat) to your vehicle's tether anchor and tighten.
- ☐ **Installed tightly.** The car seat shouldn't move side-to-side or front-to-back more than 1 inch at the belt path.

### ☐ Buckle your child in the car seat, every time.

Remember that buckling your child in correctly is just as important as installing the seat correctly.

Be sure to check:

#### ☐ The position of the harness straps.

##### **Rear-Facing**

Straps should be routed through the harness slots at or just **below** your child's shoulders.



##### **Forward-Facing**

Straps should be routed through the harness slots at or just **above** your child's shoulders.



- ☐ **The fit of the harness.** The harness straps should be snug and free of twists. You shouldn't be able to pinch excess webbing at your child's shoulders.
- ☐ **The harness buckle.** Make sure buckle pieces are fully inserted and secure.
- ☐ **The chest clip.** Buckle the chest clip at your child's armpit level.