



What is Right Age for a Booster Seat?

By Ashley Hineman, M.D.

Every year thousands of children die in car crashes, many by not being secured in a car seat. Car seat safety is an important issue that every parent should understand. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants remain in a rear-facing car seat until one year of age and twenty pounds. If your child reaches the weight and/or height limits of your car seat, they should be switched to a convertible seat until they are one year old. Convertible car seats can be placed rear or front-facing. It is important to *never* put any type of car seat in the front seat of the car. Convertible car seats can be placed front-facing from 20 pounds and 1 year of age until your child reaches the maximum weight and height limits of the car seat, typically around 65 pounds and 49 inches.

Once your child outgrows the convertible car seat weight and/or height limit then they should be secured with a belt-positioning booster seat. Your child is ready for a regular seat belt once they weigh about 80 pounds and reach 57 inches in height, usually between the ages of eight to twelve years old. This is when the belt will fit them properly. The lap belt needs to lay low and flat across their hips not the stomach. Once your child is thirteen years old they can ride in the front seat, but remember that no matter what age your child is, the safest place for them to ride in the car is the rear middle seat.

Keep your child in their car seat as long as you can. It is the safest way for them to travel. Most importantly, always make sure your children are secured in their car safety seats or belts when the car is moving, even if you are just driving down the street!



This article is for educational purposes only and should not be considered to be medical advice. It is not a substitution for a visit with your doctor. All medical information is incomplete without a physical exam, which isn't possible without a visit to your doctor.

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