



Child Passenger Safety

OVERVIEW

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading killer of children older than 1 year, yet state legislative efforts to improve child passenger safety standards have remained largely stalled in recent years. Missing from many state child passenger laws are requirements for safety seat to be rear-facing seats until age 2 years and rear seat requirements for older children.

While great progress has been made on the state level to keep children safe, more work remains for advocates of child safety and injury prevention.

AAP POSITION

- Infants and toddlers should ride facing the rear of the vehicle until they are at least 2 years old.
- Young children should ride in car safety seats with a harness until at least age 4 years, with guidance educating parents and caregivers about the benefits of riding in a seat with a 5-point harness up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer.
- School-aged children should ride in belt positioning booster seats until at least age 8 years or until the seat belt fits correctly, as described by the AAP and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- Children should ride in the rear seat until age 13 years.
- Seat belt laws should apply to all vehicle occupants and should be subject to primary enforcement.

