

Ohio Child Passenger Safety Laws



Car crashes are the #1 cause of death among children in the United States. Depending on age, weight and height, children need to be in car seats, booster seats, or seat belts every time they are in the car. This fact sheet explains Ohio's Child Passenger Safety Laws and provides parents with additional tips to keep children safe on the road.

Facts about Car Crashes

- Every day, an average of 5 children are killed and nearly 600 are injured in car crashes in the United States.
- More than half of the children killed are not using child safety seats or seat belts.
- Using a child safety seat can reduce the risk of death by up to 70 percent.

Ohio Child Passenger Safety Laws

Parents and caregivers are required by Ohio law to obey the following safety practices.

- Infants and young children must ride in a child safety seat until they are 4 years old AND weigh at least 40 pounds.
- Every child ages 4-8 who is no longer in a car seat must use a booster seat until she reaches 4'9" tall.
- Children and teens ages 8-15 who are not in booster seats must use adult seat belts.

Safety Tips for Child Passengers

- Make sure your child is in the proper seat for her age, weight and height.
- Have children ride in the backseat of the car until they are at least 13 years old.
- Before installing a child safety seat, read the instructions and your owner's manual.
- Check that you have used the correct belt path for the seat belt or the lower anchors.
- The car seat should be installed tightly. It should not move more than one inch from side-to-side or toward the front of the car.
- Harness straps must be snug around your child. You should not be able to pinch any slack in the harness.
- If the car seat has a plastic retainer clip, adjust it to be level with the armpits.
- Replace any child safety seat that has cracks, missing pieces or worn straps, or that has reached the manufacturer's expiration date.

1. Rear-Facing Car Seats

- Babies and young children are required by Ohio law to be in child safety seats until they are at least 4 years old and weigh more than 40 pounds.
- For best protection, infants and toddlers should be in safety seats facing the back of the car until 2 years of age, or until reaching the maximum height or weight of their convertible car seat.



2. Forward-Facing Car Seats

- Once a child has outgrown the weight or height limits of the rear-facing seat, he or she can switch to a seat that faces forward.
- Infants must not face forward until they are at least 1 year old and weigh at least 20 pounds.
- Children should remain in a harnessed car seat until reaching the weight or height limit of the seat. Most car seats have forward-facing weight limits of 40-65 pounds.



3. Booster Seats

- Once a child reaches 4 years of age and weighs at least 40 pounds, she can move to a booster seat.
- A child is required by law to use the booster seat until she is 8 years old or 4'9" tall.
- Both backless and high back booster seats are available. Check the manufacturer's instructions to see which is best for your child.



4. Lap and Shoulder Seat belts

- Most children are ready to use a lap and shoulder seat belt without a booster when they are about 4'9" tall.
- Children are required by law to be secured in a child safety seat or seat belt until they are 15 years old.
- For best protection, everyone in the car should be buckled up on every trip.



For more information, please contact the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital (614) 722-2400, www.injurycenter.org or CIRP.info@nationwidechildrens.org