Car and Car Seat Safety

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Riding in a car can be dangerous for babies and young children. It's important to be up to date on current safety rules for car seats as well as driver safety. State laws vary so check your local laws.

CAR SAFETY

- Never leave a baby or child alone in a car. It is not safe for any period of time. On warm days, children can get heat stroke if they are left in the car. This is true even if the windows are open.
- Create habits that will stop you from leaving your baby or child in the car by mistake. It probably seems like you could never do this. But this does happen when caregivers are exhausted and in a hurry. Try putting your coat, purse, or briefcase in the backseat. Or put baby's coat or diaper bag on the front seat. That way you will be less likely to forget that your baby is in the car. Make it a habit to check the backseat of the car every time you park it, just in case.
- Be aware of your blind spots when backing up the car. This is extra important with cars that don't have back-up cameras. Young children are impossible to see if they are right behind your car.

CAR SEAT SAFETY

Babies should ride in a rear-facing car seat from birth and for as long as possible—until they are at least 2 years old and too big to do so. Check your car seat's height and weight limits. It is OK if your baby or toddler's feet touch the seat or they have to bend their knees.

- Make sure car seats are properly installed in the backseat with the seatbelt or LATCH system (9 out of 10 car seats are not installed correctly!). These straps should be tight and when you push on it, the car seat should not move or wiggle. Read and follow the instructions (for guidance: https://saferide4kids.com/cps-technician/).

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- While the car seat is rear facing, its straps should sit at or below baby's shoulders. The chest clip should rest at the center of your baby's chest (at the same level as the armpits). Make sure the straps are pulled tightly. You should only be able to fit two fingers underneath them. Bulky coats and snowsuits can affect car seat safety, so dress your baby in lighter layers while riding in the car.
- Upgrade your car seat as baby grows. Do not buy or use a used car seat unless you know the history and are sure it has not been in a crash. If it is not brand new, make sure it has not expired. You can check to see if it's been recalled at: www.safercar.gov. You can also call the Auto Safety Hotline: 1-888-327-4236. Find out more about car seat and vehicle safety from the U.S. Department of Transportation: https://www.nhtsa.gov/keeping-kids-safe.

SCAN FOR MORE INFO

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