



## Seat Smart: Installing and Using Car Seats Safely



SEATS for Kids  
[www.seatsforkids.ca](http://www.seatsforkids.ca)

### Whether taking trips to the grocery store or treks to visit grandparents, you and your child will drive thousands of kilometers every year.

Through our clinics we have found that as many as 90% of car seats are installed improperly. A properly installed car seat can reduce the risk of serious injury or death by as much as 71%.

It's important to find the seat that is right for you and your child. Learn more about how to ensure your child's car seat is installed and used properly, and where you can go for more help.

**SEATS for Kids is committed to ensuring every parent or caregiver knows how to install and use their child's car seat safely every time.**



### There's No Rush to the Next Stage

Don't rush your child to the next stage seat. Keep babies and toddlers rear facing as long as possible. Many seats will accommodate rear facing beyond age 2. Children should remain harnessed until they reach their car seat's height or weight requirements, remain in a booster as long as possible and ride in the back seat until age 13.

### Choosing a Car Seat for Your Child

All car seats for sale in Canada undergo the same rigorous testing and all are safe when used correctly. When buying a car seat, look for the National Safety Mark label, which indicates that the seat is legal for use in Canada. Every car seat and booster also has an expiry date and should not be used past that date.

### The Best Seat is the One That...

#### 1. Fits your child

All car seats, including boosters, include height and weight limits that must be followed. Your child must meet the minimum requirements for their seat. If your child outgrows their seat before they are ready to move to the next stage, a new seat with high height or weight limits is needed.

#### 2. Fits your vehicle

Not every car seat can be installed correctly in every vehicle. Make sure the seat can be safely installed in your vehicle, following the instructions in the manual. If you need help, meet with a technician or attend a car seat clinic.

#### 3. Is used correctly every time

Follow the instructions that come with your seat to make sure your child is riding safely in their seat every time you travel.



Credit: Cate Lynch Photography

SEATS for Kids volunteers are trained child passenger safety technicians with the knowledge and experience to help you use your car seat properly and safely.

### We Can Help You

SEATS for Kids offers many clinics throughout the year. Our child passenger safety technicians will teach you how to install and properly use your seat in your vehicle with your child. We want you to feel confident that you are using your seat safely. Visit our website for dates, locations and registration information.



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# Sit Right: Your Guide to a Growing Child

## STAGE 1



Rear Facing Infant or Child Seat

### Seat Installation Check:

- ✓ Child is facing the back of the vehicle.
- ✓ Seat is reclined at the proper angle (see your manual)
- ✓ The seat does not move more than 1 inch side to side or forward at the belt path.
- ✓ There are no unregulated aftermarket products such as head positioners, bunting bags, harness covers, etc.

### Child Harness Check:

- ✓ The harness straps begin at or below the child's shoulders
- ✓ You can't pinch any excess harness strap
- ✓ The chest clip is flat against the chest and in line with the child's armpits

### Tips:

Most babies outgrow their infant bucket seat before they are ready to move to stage 2 (forward facing). When your child outgrows the maximum height or weight of their infant seat, they will likely require a convertible rear facing seat until they are ready to face forward. Many seats can rear face a child up to 18kg (40lbs) or more.

## STAGE 2



Forward Facing Child Seat



### Is My Child Ready for Stage 2?

For your child's safety, they should stay rear facing as long as possible. Best practice is to remain rear facing to the limits of the seat, until at least age 2.

### Seat Installation Check:

- ✓ The top tether strap is attached to your vehicle's tether anchor.
- ✓ Unless your vehicle's manual states otherwise, the UAS system should only be used until the weight of the child and their seat combined reaches 30kg (65lbs). After this, the seat must be installed using the seat belt.

### Child Harness Check:

- ✓ The shoulder straps are at or slightly above your child's shoulders.
- ✓ You should not be able to pinch any excess harness horizontally.
- ✓ Chest clip is in line with the child's armpits

## STAGE 3



Booster Seat



### Is My Child Ready for Stage 3?

The law requires booster seats for children who have outgrown a child car seat but are too small for the adult seat belt.

If a child has outgrown a harnessed seat by weight or height but they are not 18kg (40lbs) *and* developmentally ready for a booster, look for a taller, higher-weight harnessed seat.

A booster should be used until your child fits the seat belt safely.

### Booster Installation Check:

- ✓ The seat belt is positioned properly over the collarbone and flat across the upper thighs while your child is sitting in their booster. It does not cover the belly, dig into the neck or slip off of the shoulder.

### Child Seat Belt Check:

- ✓ Your child must be able to sit up straight all of the time to be safe. This means your child does not slouch forward or lean over when they fall asleep.

## STAGE 4



Seat Belt



### Is My Child Ready for Stage 4?

A seat belt alone can be used when children are tall enough for it to be positioned correctly and can use it properly. In Ontario, the child must be over the age of 8 years or weigh more than 36kg (80lbs) or be taller than 145cm (4'9"). Height is the most important factor. Most children are not tall enough until they are 11 or older.

### Child Seat Belt Check:

- ✓ The Seat belt is positioned properly over the shoulder, across the collarbone and lays flat across the hips.

### Tips

Your child must sit with their feet on the floor, knees bent comfortably at the edge of the vehicle seat and back straight against the seat back 100% of the time.