

18 months and 22 pounds

Rear-Facing Longer

Tips about how and why to keep your child rear-facing when riding in the car.

Q: Why should my baby ride rear-facing?

A: The risk of severe injury to your baby is greatly reduced by using a rear-facing car seat. Rear-facing helps support your child's entire body and protects her better from an injury, especially to the spine.

Q: What types of car seats can be used rear-facing?

A: There are two types of rear-facing car seats: infant only seats (Figure 1a) and convertible seats (Figure 1b). The smaller infant seats are only used rear-facing for babies who weigh up to 22 pounds (a few go to 35 pounds). Many models come with a carrying handle and a detachable base into which the car seat locks.

Convertible seats are generally designed to be used rear-facing for infants who weigh 5 to 30-35 pounds (some go higher) and forward-facing for toddlers who weigh up to 40 pounds (some go higher).



(1a) Infant only

(1b) Convertible

Figure 1



Figure 2

Q: My baby is one year old and 20 pounds. May I turn him forward-facing?

A: Research shows that babies are better protected if they stay rear-facing as long as possible. In order to keep your child rear-facing longer, you will need to choose a car seat with a rear-facing weight limit of about 30-40 pounds. If your car seat only rear-faces to 20-22 pounds, you may need to move your baby into an infant only or convertible car seat with a higher rear-facing weight limit.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children should ride facing the rear as long as possible and to the highest weight and length allowed by the manufacturer of the seat.

Q: When driving, I can't see my child and I want to turn her around so I can see her. Can I use a mirror so I can see her and keep her rear-facing longer?

A: There are no federal safety standards for many products like mirrors. If the mirror were to fly loose in a crash there is a chance of it hurting you or your child. If possible have another adult or older child sit next to your baby to observe her. Remember that babies usually sleep without direct observation at home.

Q: My baby has long legs and his feet touch the back of the vehicle seat when sitting rear-facing in his car seat. Is this safe?

A: Yes. Babies are very flexible and it is okay for his legs to bend when he is rear-facing in the car seat (Figure 3 and Figure 4). He is much safer from serious injury in the rear-facing position with his legs bent than if he were riding forward-facing.

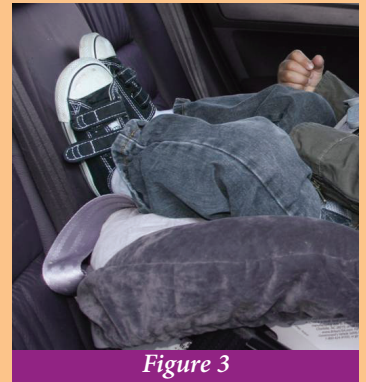


Figure 3

Q: What if someone rear-ends my car, won't my baby be safer forward-facing?

A: Studies show that using a rear-facing car safety seat lowers the risk of injury for crashes of all directions.

Q: How can I be sure my baby is buckled up correctly?

A: Always read and follow the directions that come with your car safety seat and your vehicle owner's manual. You can find a location where a child passenger safety technician can help you with your seats by visiting www.preventinjury.org or www.seatcheck.org.



Figure 4

For More Information Contact: Automotive Safety Program
800-KID-N-CAR
www.preventinjury.org

