

# CAR SEAT SAFETY



While most parents know the importance of placing their children in car seats, research shows that 80% of children are not properly secured in their car seat. The most common mistakes are placing children in seats that are not appropriate for their age and not properly securing the car seat in the vehicle.

## Car Seat Guidelines

- > All car seats should be placed in the back seat.
- > Infants should always be placed in a rear-facing infant or convertible car seat.
- > Infants should stay rear facing until they reach one year of age AND 20 pounds.
- > Once your child is at least one year of age and 20 pounds, their car seat can be turned forward facing.
- > When your child's weight exceeds 40 pounds, they should be placed in a belt positioning booster seat.
- > North Carolina law states that children must remain in booster seats until they reach eight years of age or 80 pounds.
- > When your child is large enough and old enough to sit in the regular seat, make sure the seat belt shoulder strap fits across their shoulder and not their neck. Also, make sure the lap belt fits across the child's hips and not their stomach.
- > Children under 12 years of age should remain in the back seat at all times, especially if you have air bags in your car.

## Other Car Safety Tips

- > Make it a policy to never set your car keys inside the vehicle once the child is seated inside. It is all too easy to shut the back door without realizing that the car doors are locked.
- > Children should never be left alone in a car, even for a few minutes. Your child could be injured, hurt, or even stolen.
- > Do not let your children play with automatic locks or window controls.
- > If toys or items are carried in the vehicle, make sure they are properly restrained to keep them from moving around the vehicle.
- > Never take a child out of their car seat while the vehicle is in motion. If you need to tend to your child, find a safe place to park the car out of the path of traffic.

## Car Seat Safety Check List

Once you have the proper car seat, it is easy to make mistakes by not properly securing the seat or your child.

- Do the harness straps fit your child snugly and in the correct position?
- Is the chest harness clip in the right position?
- Is the seat belt securing the seat in the vehicle properly locked and fitted tightly?
- Is the seat belt securing the seat in the vehicle threaded through the seat correctly?
- Is the seat in the path of an airbag?
- Have you fully read and understood the usage instructions that came with your child's car seat?