

Child Vehicle Seat Safety Tips



The Methuen Fire Department would like to offer some valuable car seat safety tips for our citizens, courtesy of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- 1. Make sure your child rides in the backseat.** The backseat is generally the safest place in a crash. If your vehicle has a passenger air bag, it's essential for children 12 and under to ride in back.
- 2. Make sure infants ride facing the rear until they're about age 1 and at least 20 to 22 pounds.** Infants who weigh 20 pounds before 1 year of age should ride in a restraint approved for higher rear-facing weights. Always read your child restraint owner manual for instructions on properly using the restraint. Children over age 1 and at least 20 pounds may ride facing forward.
- 3. Check to see that the safety belt holds the seat tightly in place.** Put the belt through the correct slot. If your safety seat can be used facing either way, use the correct belt slots for each direction. The safety belt must stay tight when securing the safety seat.
- 4. Make sure the harness is buckled snugly around your child.** Keep the straps over your child's shoulder. The harness should be adjusted so you can slip only one finger underneath the straps at your child's chest. Place the chest clip at armpit level.
- 5. Have children over 40 pounds use a booster seat.** Keep your child in a safety seat with a full harness as long as possible, until he's at least 40 pounds. Then use a belt-positioning booster seat, which helps the adult lap and shoulder belt fit better. A belt-positioning booster seat, used with the adult lap and shoulder belt, is preferred for children weighing 40 to 80 pounds.
- 6. Check safety belt fit on older children.** The child must be tall enough to sit without slouching, with knees bent at the edge of the seat, with feet on the floor. The lap belt must fit low and tight across the upper thighs. The shoulder belt should rest over the shoulder and across the chest. Never put the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind her back. The adult lap and shoulder belt system alone will not fit most children until they're at least 4 feet 9 inches tall and weigh about 80 pounds.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

