

Keeping Children Safe in the Car



Pre-reading

Questions: How long do children need to use a car seat?

What percentage of parents do you think have car seats installed incorrectly?

Definitions: Restrain – to control or hold down

Lenient – easy, not strict

Criteria – the standard or rule

Reading

17 Did you know that car accidents are the leading cause of death for children? Car seat safety
34 is very important. Well-intentioned parents, who desire to keep their children safe in the car, often
49 make common mistakes that put their children at risk. Parents and caregivers can increase their
63 children’s safety by using proper car seats in accordance with the age recommendations. Also,
74 everyone needs to be sure that car seats are installed correctly.

74 Minnesota law requires that children under the age of 4 be restrained in a car seat. In
91 addition, it is recommended that children under 80 pounds and under 4’9” use a booster seat.
108 Minnesota has the most lenient age requirement law regarding car seat use when compared to all of
125 its surrounding states. Many other states require the use of a car seat or booster seat until age 8.

144 Minnesota law also states that car seats must be the right kind for the size of the child.
162 Children under age 1 *and* under 20 pounds must be in a rear facing car seat. Many parents make
181 the mistake of thinking that their child can face forward if they are 1 year old or 20 pounds, but this
202 is incorrect; the child must meet both criteria.

210 Once the child is forward facing, he or she should be in a car seat with a harness that is
230 belted into the car using the car’s seatbelt (more recently, the “Latch” system can also be used if
248 the car and the car seat both have it).

257 Children can move to a booster seat when they reach 40 pounds. In a booster seat, the child
275 is belted in with the car’s seatbelt. The booster seat helps to make sure the vehicle’s seatbelt fits
293 the child correctly. The booster seat should be used in the back seats of vehicles. Children should
310 never be placed in the front seat until the age of 13. Even though air bags save lives, they can
330 cause serious injury and even death to a child.

339 Proper installation of a car seat helps keep children safe. According to the National Highway
354 Traffic Safety Administration, as many as 80 percent of all car seats are incorrectly installed and
370 used. This is an alarming number. The confusing designs of many car seats are to blame. It is
388 important to read the instruction book carefully to ensure that seats are installed correctly. Most
403 communities offer free car seat installation checks by trained car seat inspectors. Contact your
417 local police department to find out where to have car seats checked in your area.

432 Car seat safety is a must for the wellbeing of our children. By making sure the proper car
450 seats are used and installed correctly, parents and caregivers can rest assured that their children are
466 as safe as possible in their motor vehicles.

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Source: www.carseatsmadesimple.com

Level 8.0

Understanding

1. Until what age should children use a car seat? _____

2. Why is car seat safety so important? _____

3. What criteria must be met before a child may face forward in a car? _____

4. Why should children never be placed in the front seat of a motor vehicle? _____

5. What are some common mistakes people make with car seats? _____

6. If a person has questions about proper car seat installation, what should he/she do? _____

7. Why might car seats be installed incorrectly? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: What new information did you learn about car seat safety? How might you use this information?
