



## Child Passenger Safety

### OVERVIEW

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading killer of children older than 1 year, yet state legislative efforts to improve child passenger safety standards have remained largely stalled in recent years. Missing from many state child passenger laws are requirements for safety seat to be rear-facing seats until age 2 years and rear seat requirements for older children.

While great progress has been made on the state level to keep children safe, more work remains for advocates of child safety and injury prevention.

### AAP POSITION

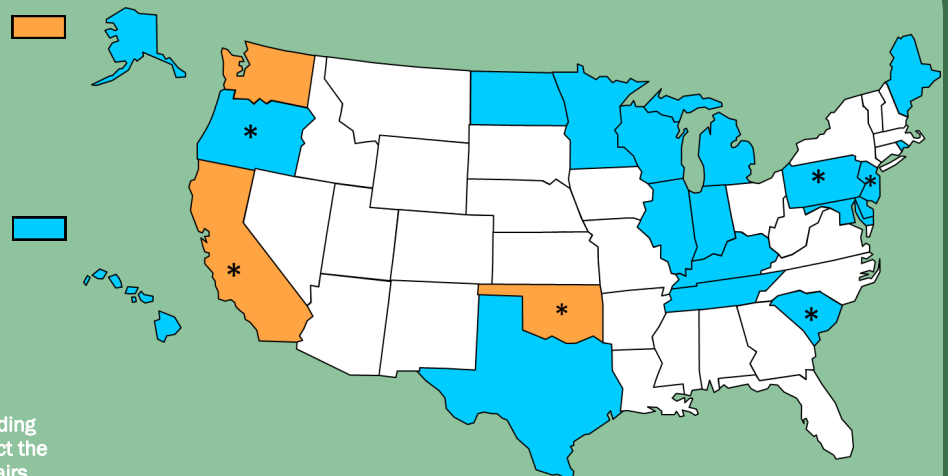
- Infants and toddlers should ride facing the rear of the vehicle until they are at least 2 years old.
- Young children should ride in car safety seats with a harness until at least age 4 years, with guidance educating parents and caregivers about the benefits of riding in a seat with a 5-point harness up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer.
- School-aged children should ride in belt positioning booster seats until at least age 8 years or until the seat belt fits correctly, as described by the AAP and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- Children should ride in the rear seat until age 13 years.
- Seat belt laws should apply to all vehicle occupants and should be subject to primary enforcement.

## FACTS

- More than 1,100 children in the US, ages 14 years and younger, died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes, and approximately 165,000 were injured, in 2013.
- More than 618,000 children ages 0-12 years rode in vehicles during a 1 year period without the use of a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt at least some of the time, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Child safety seats reduce the risk of death in passenger cars by 71% for infants, and by 54% for toddlers ages 1 to 4 years.
- Booster seats reduce the risk for serious injury by 45% for children ages 4 to 8 years.
- There is strong evidence that child safety seat laws are effective in increasing child safety seat use.

## PROGRESS

- 3 states— laws include 4 of 5 AAP recommended child passenger safety provisions
- 19 states and DC— laws include 3 of 5 AAP recommended child passenger safety provisions



For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact the AAP Division of State Government Affairs at [stgov@aap.org](mailto:stgov@aap.org)

*\*Indicates that the state has a rear-facing until age 2 requirement.*

## MORE

- [AAP Policy—Child Passenger Safety](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/127/4/788.full)—  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/127/4/788.full>
- [AAP Technical Report—Child Passenger Safety](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/127/4/e1050.full)—  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/127/4/e1050.full>
- [HealthyChildren.org Car Seat Guide for Families](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx)—  
[www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx)