



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

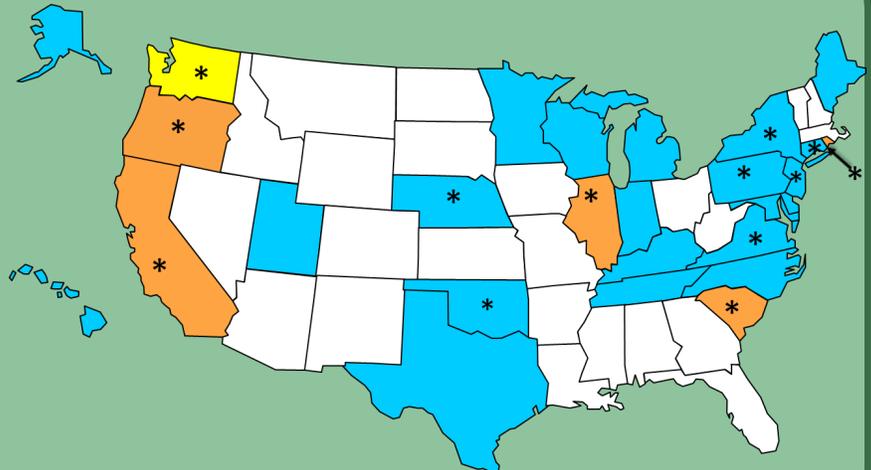
- Infants and toddlers are safest when they ride facing the rear of the vehicle. Some states have enacted laws that require infants and toddlers to ride rear-facing until age 2.
- Young children should ride in car safety seats with a harness until at least age 4 years, with guidance educating parents 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

- In the United States, 663 children ages 12 years and younger died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes during 2015 and more than 121,350 were injured in 2014.
- 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

- 1 state — law include 5 out of 5 AAP child passenger safety (CPS) recommendations 
- 5 states and DC — laws include 4 of 5 AAP CPS recommended provisions 
- 21 states— laws include 3 of 5 AAP recommended CPS provisions 



For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact AAP State Advocacy at stgov@aap.org

**California, Connecticut, Illinois, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia have enacted rear-facing until age 2 requirements.*

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