Car Seat Recommendations for Children

- Select a car seat based on your child’s age and size, and choose a seat that fits in your vehicle and use it every time.
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer’s instructions; read the vehicle owner’s manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system; and check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer’s height and weight requirements.
- Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12.

Birth - 12 months
Your child under age 1 should always ride in a rear-facing car seat. There are different types of rear-facing car seats: Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing. Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time.

1 - 3 years
Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. It’s the best way to keep him or her safe. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat’s manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness.

4 - 7 years
Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat’s manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it’s time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat.

8 - 12 years
Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember: your child should still ride in the back seat because it’s safer there.

It’s the law!
Child Passenger Safety Act (KSA 8-1343)
- This law requires all children under age 4 to be in a federally approved child safety seat. Children ages 4 to 8 must be in a federally approved child safety seat OR booster seat UNLESS the child weighs more than 80 lbs. OR is taller than 4’9”.
- Children 8 years of age and under the age of 14 must be protected by a safety belt. This applies to all passenger cars designed for carrying 10 passengers or fewer, as defined by KSA 8-1578a.
- Persons under age 14 are prohibited from riding in any portion of the vehicle not intended for passengers, as defined by KSA 8-1343a. This includes riding in the back of pickup trucks.

Safety Belt Use Act (KSA 8-2501)
- Primary Enforcement: Occupants of a passenger car* 14 years of age but younger than 18 years of age can be cited for this violation-KSA 8-2503. The fine is $60, including court costs.
- Front-seat occupants of a passenger car* 18 years and older can be cited for a seat belt violation. The fine is $10, including court costs.
- Secondary Enforcement: Second and third-row occupants of a passenger car* 18 years and older can be cited for a seat belt violation only after another citation is issued, such as a front-seat primary seat belt violation (KSA 8-2501). The fine is $10, including court costs.

Commercial Seat Belt DOT 49 CFR 392.16
A commercial motor vehicle which has a seat belt assembly installed at the driver’s seat shall not be driven unless the driver has properly restrained himself/herself with the seat belt assembly. Fine: $500 plus court cost.

*This law applies to all passenger cars carrying 10 passengers or fewer as defined by KSA 8-2502.