



BUFFALO CAR SEAT CLUB

**SIMPLIFIED CAR SEAT SAFETY
FOR THE 716**

NEWBORN GUIDE

www.buffalocarseatclub.com

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Introduction

Congratulations!

This is a very exciting time for you and your family. While we know you're busy decorating the nursery and organizing all of those cute baby clothes, we're here to remind you of the importance of car seat safety.

We've compiled this easy-to-read booklet to help get you started on your journey.

New York State law requires children to be in a child passenger safety restraint until 8 years of age. And for many children, best practice is to keep them in a child passenger safety restraint even longer. So buckle up... we're going for a road trip (no pun intended)!

Here in Western New York, we have over 30 car seat safety inspections stations and a wonderful team of expert Child Passenger Safety Technicians who are ready to guide you.

**Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.
We're always just an email or DM away!**



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Why is car seat safety important?

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for children and adolescents. However, many of these accidents are preventable with appropriate car seat safety knowledge.

Car seats decrease the risk of fatal injury by 71% among infants, and by 54% in toddlers. (NHTSA)

Over 9 out of 10 parents leave the hospital with their newborns incorrectly secured in their seat. (OHSU)



New York State law requires all children to be in a rear-facing position until two years of age minimum. However, Child Passenger Safety Technicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics and other healthcare professionals encourage rear-facing as long as possible. It is best practice and it is becoming more common to see children rear-face through four or five years of age.



If you cannot afford a car seat for your child, there are programs available to you in Western New York. Visit buffalocarseatclub.com or email buffalocarseatclub@gmail.com

What is a CPST?

CPST stands for Child Passenger Safety Technician. Child Passenger Safety Technicians are car seat safety experts. All CPSTs across the nation receive training developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and are certified through Safekids Worldwide. Each Child Passenger Safety Technician receives a technician license number.

It's important to know that not all police, fire department, and/or healthcare professionals are qualified CPSTs. Typically, you will need to schedule an appointment in advance with a local CPST or attend a public safety check event in order to have your car seat installation reviewed by a licensed professional.

CPSTs can do the following:

1. Review your car seat installation
2. Explain and teach proper car seat installation to you
3. Discuss Good, Better and Best practices for car seat safety while making recommendations for your family and lifestyle.



How to find your local CPST:

1. www.safekids.org
2. www.trafficsafety.ny.gov/child-safety-seat-inspection-stations
3. www.buffalocarseatclub.com

Where else to get help:

1. Your car seat user manual
2. Your car seat manufacturer by calling their 800 number
3. email buffalocarseatclub@gmail.com

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Car Seat Recommendations

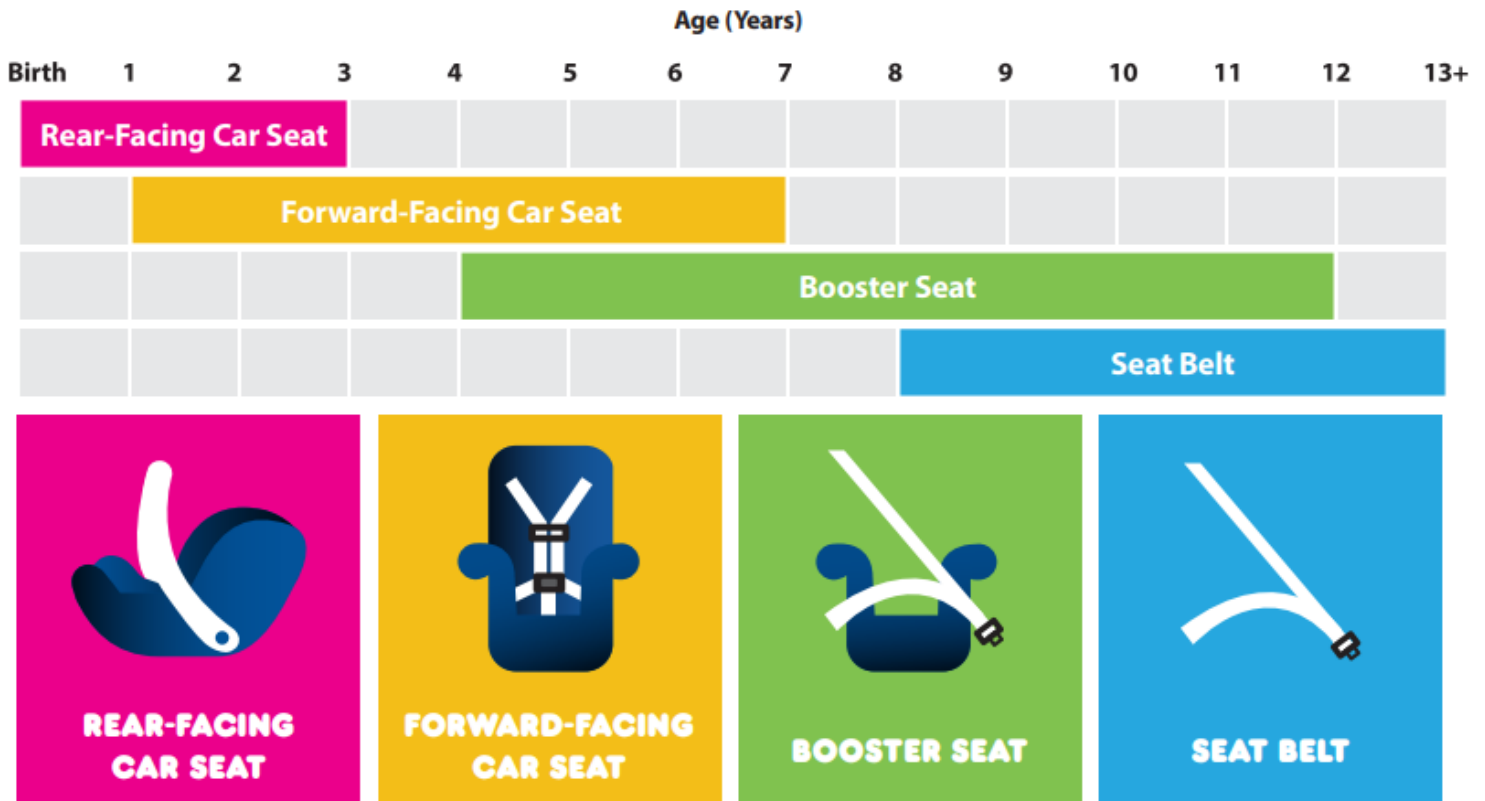


image from NHTSA.GOV

IMPORTANT!

Your infant is likely using a rear-facing infant-only car seat. These seats are shaped like a bucket and have a carrying handle attached. Often, they connect with a stroller for convenience. Typically, children outgrow their infant bucket seat around 12 months.

At that time, you will need to switch to a rear-facing convertible car seat.

Why is rear-facing the safest position?

Rear-Facing is the safest position for your child.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children remain rear-facing until two years of age. As CPSTs, we encourage rear-facing until your child maxes out the parameters of their convertible car seat. Many car seats will take a child through 40 or 50lbs. This advanced technology and higher weight limit will allow your child to remain rear-facing until they're closer to four years old.

In a rear-facing position, the car seat itself absorbs the majority of crash forces...protecting the head, neck and spine.

We encourage caregivers to watch this crash test video to visualize the importance of rear-facing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tuZFVpV3Rpk>

The below image was taken from the video link above. Note the position of baby's head, neck, and spine. Statistics show that 77% of children are switched to forward facing too early. (NHTSA.GOV)



Rear-Facing

Forward-Facing

Harness Position

Your child should be correctly harnessed each and every time they are in the vehicle. Always check for correct positioning before you drive off.

The Chest Clip: The chest clip should be at armpit level across the chest. If the chest clip is too low, the child may be ejected during an impact. If the chest clip is too high the child may sustain neck injuries during an impact. (CSFTL)

Shoulder straps: Shoulder straps should rest at or below your child's shoulders in a rear-facing position. In a forward-facing position they should sit at or above your child's shoulders.

Crotch buckle: The crotch buckle should be at the closest slot to your child's crotch, but not underneath. Refer to your user manual for instructions, as your manufacturer may have specific guidelines. Incorrect crotch buckle placement is a leading cause of discomfort of a child in their car seat. The crotch buckle will likely need to be adjusted around 3 months old.

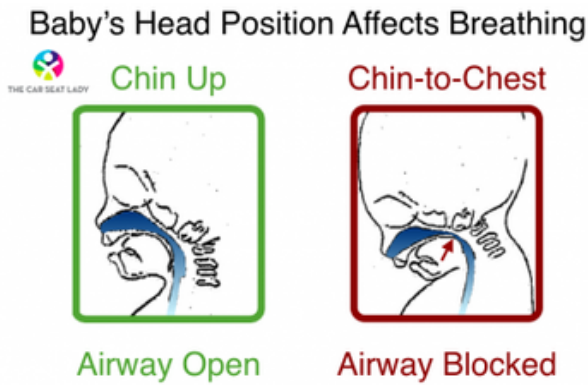


image from: A chest clip goes... on the chest! - Car Seats For The Littles (csftl.org)

Chin to Chest

Chin to chest is a position that occurs when your child's head falls forward and their chin literally touches their chest. It is imperative to avoid newborn and infant chin to chest in the car seat. When an infant's head falls forward to their chest, it is possible that their airway will become blocked. An infant does not have the developed muscle strength and spine to keep their airway open in this position. Rest assured, as baby grows and is able to keep their head up unsupported the risk for chin to chest decreases. By 6+ months of age, chin to chest is no longer a concern.

The best way to avoid chin to chest is to ensure your car seat is appropriately installed and the recline angle is correct. At the newborn stage, you should be at the most reclined position of your car seat. Please reference your user manual to locate the recline angle level of your specific car seat.



Images adapted from: Tonkin SL. NZ Med J 1998
Image from thecarseatlady.com



Lower anchor or seatbelt

There are two ways to install your car seat. Either the lower anchors OR the seatbelt.

Most manufacturers do not allow for use of both simultaneously. Using both the lower anchors and the seatbelt together may jeopardize the integrity of the installation.

*Disclaimer, there are currently two seats on the US market that do allow for use of both. Please reference both your car seat manual and your vehicle manual to see if this is permitted for your car.



Image from ISOFIX/LATCH lower anchors | Attachment points for child seats | SaFety | XC90 2021 Early | Volvo Support. (volvocars.com)



Bent Knees or Long Legs

Within the first 12 months your child will grow large enough to have bent knees in their rear-facing car seat. It's important to know that long legs or bent knees are never a reason to switch your child to forward-facing. Rear-facing with bent knees is still the safest way to protect your child. You will soon witness your playful child rolling around and bending in all sorts of positions. Children are naturally more flexible than adults, because their bones have not fully ossified... so even if they look uncomfortable in their rear-facing seat, rest assured that they are not.

Height or Weight or 1"

Around 12 months, your child will be ready for a transition out of their infant-only seat to a rear-facing convertible car seat when they reach one of the following:

- they max out the height limit of the car seat
- they max out of the weight limit
- they have less than 1 inch of room between the top of their head and the top of the carseat

NICU Babies

If your newborn is in the NICU they will be required to pass a car seat test before discharge. You will be required to bring your car seat into the hospital for this test. As your child's advocate, it's important to remember not all nurses and healthcare professionals are CPSTs. For the test to be accurately performed, your newborn must be correctly harnessed into their car seat. If you are not certain your newborn is harnessed correctly, you may ask if the hospital has a CPST on staff to double check. If there are no technicians available, we encourage you to schedule an appointment with a CPST as soon as possible.



Special Needs

Did you know there are special car seats available for children who are medically unable to use a standard car seat? If you have a child with special needs the Western New York CPST team is here to help. Please reach out to your nearest CPST for further information or email buffalocarseatclub@gmail.com

Avoid after-market products

After-market products are 3rd party products available on store shelves.

Popular stores like BuyBuyBaby, Target, Walmart ...etc... sell dangerous products that jeopardize the safety of your car seat. In addition, most manufacturers explicitly prohibit the use of after-market products with their seat. You may be able to find this language in your user manual. These products often have bogus claims of being 'crash tested and approved'. Currently, there is no federal crash-testing or regulations regarding after-market products. After-market products should not be used with your car seat.

Just say NO!



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More things to know...

Winter and summer car seat safety

Winter coats and puffy jackets should not be used in the car seat. Instead, use thin fleece layers (footed onesies are okay) or buckle your child into their seat and then place a baby blanket on top of their buckled harness. In the summer, avoid placing fabric (such as a muslin blanket) over the car seat for shade. This will create a greenhouse effect and may overheat your child.

Cleaning car seat safety

Your car seat user manual will contain cleaning instructions for your specific car seat. Most manufacturers do not permit the use of every-day household cleaning products. It is imperative to clean the car seat per manufacturer guidelines, otherwise you may damage the integrity of the car seat.

Shopping cart car seat safety

While out and about, please keep in mind that car seats should not be attached to a shopping cart or placed on the top portion of the cart. If you must bring your car seat into the store, place the entire car seat in the large bucket area of the shopping cart.

Recalls

Car seat manufactures issue recalls much more frequently than you would think. It's crucial to submit that recall postcard immediately once you unbox your new car seat. Sometimes a seat may be recalled for something small, like a typo on a sticker. Other times, it could be life-threatening. It's important to be notified if your seat gets recalled.

Fitting the car seat

Not every car seat fits in every car. It's important to try the car seat in your vehicle before you purchase it. Stores like BuyBuyBaby allow you to try the car seat in your vehicle.

Stretch Breaks

Children should not remain in their car seat for more than 2 hours at a time. If you're taking a road trip - include plenty of stretch breaks.

Car Seat Expiration

Typically, car seats expire between 6-10 years after the date of manufacturing. You can find your expiration date either on a sticker on your car seat, in your user manual, or by calling the 800 number for your car seat manufacturer.

Second-hand Car Seats

Using a second-hand or used car seat is never recommended.

Safe Sleep

Remove your child from their car seat when they are not in the vehicle. Car seats are not intended for sleep. It is not safe to leave a sleeping child in their infant seat outside the vehicle.

Airplane car seat safety

The safest way for your child to fly is in their car seat. The FAA strongly encourages children sit in their car seat on the aircraft. If you're traveling by airplane, please visit buffalocarseatclub.com/airplanetrip for more information and best practices.

Prepare for baby

1. Unbox and open your car seat, be sure to submit the recall postcard.
2. Read your car seat manual thoroughly
3. Reference your vehicle manual and review child safety instructions
4. Practice installing your car seat & encourage your partner to practice as well
5. Schedule an appointment with a CPST

Car Seat Safety Checklist

- Mail in your recall postcard
- Read the car seat manual
- Practice your car seat installation
- Avoid after-market products
- Schedule an appointment with your local CPST

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