

## **REDUCE THE RISK...TIPS ON BUCKLING UP YOUR CHILD**

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According to The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), car seats that are installed correctly, can reduce fatalities in children under the age of one by 71% and children 1 to 4 by 54%. Needless to say, it's essential to try to master this life-saving task.

I can't tell you how to install your individual seat, but I can give you some vital information every parent should know while buckling up a child.

Start with the basics - this may be a tough word for many fathers..."instructions." Installing your car seat may seem like a piece of cake. No matter how much of an expert you feel you are, you must read the vehicle instructions and the car seat manufacturer instructions. Not every vehicle or car seat is the same, and the seatbelts and buckles in your vehicle will help determine how to correctly install your car seat.

Here are some basic rules:

### **WEIGHT, HEIGHT AND AGE**

- The car seat always goes in the back seat of the vehicle. It's the safest place for your child until he is at least 12 years old.
- Your infant will not only ride in the back, he will be rear facing until he is at least one year old AND twenty pounds. It's not safe to turn them around until they reach both milestones.
- If your child grows out of his infant seat, you will need to buy a seat that can remain rear-facing until his 1<sup>st</sup> birthday. You will find that some manufacturers are now making infant car seat/carriers rear facing for infants up to 30 pounds which will fit 97% of one year olds.

### **SECURING YOUR CHILD**

- It may be cold in the winter, but don't over-bundle your child. Heavy clothes could prevent the harness straps from being snug so if your child is cold, and you need to use a blanket, place it over your child after he is securely strapped into the car seat. Be sure the blanket doesn't interfere with the harness or buckle and be careful not to block his or her face with it as well.
- On most rear-facing car seats the harness straps should be at your child's shoulder level or below. When your child is older and riding front facing, most car seat harness straps should be at or above shoulder level. Please check your manufacturer's instructions for proper use.
- Make sure the straps fit snugly, lie in a straight line, aren't twisted and don't sag. The chest clip (the plastic clip attached to the harness strap) should be placed at the armpit level. This keeps the harness straps positioned properly.

### **AFTERMARKET PRODUCTS**

- Never place any extra cushioning under or behind your child. This can prevent harness straps from being snug. Only use the padding that comes with the safety seat.
- To stabilize your child's head you can place a rolled towel above your child's head or two towels next to your child's head and neck for support.

## **HELPFUL HINTS**

- In the event of a crash, you need to replace both your car seat and the vehicle seat belts used at the time of the crash. Make sure you know the crash history of the replacement car seat as well.
- Fill out the registration card that comes in the box when you purchase your car seat and send it back to the manufacturer immediately. If there is a recall, you will be contacted if your car seat needs a new part or needs to be exchanged. Some manufacturers also allow you to do this on their website.
- You can also check for car seat recalls on the web site of NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov). or the website of the CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

## **SAFETY IN AND AROUND YOUR CAR**

If you follow the safety tips for buckling up, you can help prevent injury or even death. However, many people don't realize that when a car isn't moving or is going as slow as 1 to 2 miles per hour, children can also be injured or killed. According to child safety non-profit KIDS AND CARS, the blind zones behind vehicles are much larger than most people realize; in some cases they are bigger than the average driveway. At least two children per week are being killed and at least another 48 children are being treated in hospital emergency rooms as a result of being backed over by a vehicle. To make matters worse, in 70% of these incidents a family member was behind the wheel.

Here are some suggestions to help prevent injury:

- Never ever leave your child alone in the car! Not only do you risk the possibility of abduction when you leave your child in the car, you risk overheating or hypothermia. A young child's body temperature rises and lowers 3 to 5 times faster than an adult's.
- Once a year, check and repair any holes in mufflers or exhaust pipes.
- In the winter after it snows, check the tailpipe of your car. Make sure that the snow isn't blocking the tailpipe before you start the car. Carbon monoxide poisoning doesn't just happen in the garage; it can happen anytime the tailpipe is blocked.
- Always have a first-aid kit in the car. It's a good idea to keep band-aids, medicines, a blanket, a bottle, some water and a snack in case you and your child get stuck in traffic or just plain stuck. For an added measure of protection, it's always a good idea to try to keep a charged phone in the car.

To find a certified technician in your neighborhood to inspect the installation of your car seat, call your local police or fire department. If they don't check seats themselves, they will tell you where your closest resource is located.

## **DISCLAIMER**

The information in this publication is not intended as a substitute for any information that may have been prescribed by your doctor or any other healthcare or safety professional. Graco advises readers to take full responsibility for their children's safety and know their limits. Before practicing any of the information in this publication, be sure that your home, office, automobile, play and rest areas and equipment are well-maintained, and do not take risks beyond your level of experience, aptitude, and abilities. Always read instruction manuals before assembling and using all baby products. Mention of specific companies, organizations, or authorities in this publication does not necessarily imply endorsement by Graco, nor does mention of specific companies, organizations, or authorities in the publication imply that they endorse the publication.