



SAFE KIDS USA POSITION STATEMENT CHILDREN RIDING REAR-FACING IN VEHICLES

Safe Kids USA's policy is that a child should ride rear-facing in a correctly fitted child restraint on every ride until the child exceeds the height or weight limits allowed by the manufacturer of the rear-facing restraint. A child who exceeds the highest weight allowed by the manufacturer of an infant-only carrier should be switched to a larger restraint that allows for more time rear-facing.

Riding rear-facing is a well-established policy for infants in vehicles, but older children can benefit from riding rear-facing too. When a baby or child is facing forward during a vehicle's sudden stop or a crash, his or her head is unsupported. This increases the risk of head, spinal cord or neck injuries. In a rear-facing position during a frontal collision (the most common type of vehicle crash), the child moves evenly within the car seat.

Some car seats today accommodate a rear-facing child who weighs between 30 and 45 pounds and is up to 40 inches tall. Other seats will protect a child until the top of his or her head is 1 inch (2.5cm) below the top of the child seat shell. These improvements mean children have the benefit of a rear-facing position to at least age 2. This is significantly later than earlier recommendations.

Once the child outgrows their rear-facing child restraint, they should move into a forward-facing seat with a harness.

Among the concurring organizations are:

The American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/123/5/1424>

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

<http://www.research.chop.edu/programs/carseat/infant.php>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS>

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