



## Installing a Convertible Car Seat Tips

Many parents choose convertible car seats for their convenience and because they grow with the child, saving parents from having to upgrade with every growth milestone.

Convertible seats are designed to protect kids from birth up to 40 pounds (19 kilograms) or more, depending on the model. Convertible seats are the only type of seats that are placed in different positions depending on a child's age: They face toward the rear until a baby is 20 to 35 pounds (10 to 16 kilograms) and at least 1 year old. The seats can then be turned to face forward as the child grows. Follow these guidelines when installing a convertible car seat:

- It is recommended that you use the car seat rear-facing as long as possible (but always in accordance with the manufacturer's limits for height and weight).
- An infant or small toddler should be placed in the back seat – preferably in the middle (assuming LATCH attachments and/or a shoulder belt are available there) – and must be facing toward the rear of the vehicle until at least 20 pounds (10 kilograms) and at least 1 year old.
- After your child has reached at least 20 pounds (10 kilograms) and at least 1 year of age, the seat may be turned to face forward. (Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for when to turn the seat.)
- Read the owner's manual for your car to find out how to use your car's seat belts or LATCH system with a child car seat.
- Read the entire child car seat manual. Be sure to check the recommended angle of recline for the seat when it is forward-facing and rear-facing.
- Use your knee to push down on the seat as you tighten the car's seat belt (may be a lap-only or lap/shoulder) or LATCH attachments belt through the child car seat's belt path. The seat should not move more than 1 inch (3 centimeters) side-to-side or forward and backward on the belt path. If the seat wiggles or moves on the belt path, the belt needs to be tighter.
- Some seat belts may require a special locking clip that is designed specifically to keep the belt from loosening. Locking clips are available from baby product stores, car seat manufacturers, and some car dealerships.
- Convertible car seats are usually designed with a 3-point or 5-point harness. The harness straps should always be placed in the slots and should always be at or below your baby's shoulders for rear-facing car seats. For a car seat that faces forward, harness straps must be in a slot at or above the child's shoulders. Most models have a chest clip that holds the harness straps together. Move the clip so the top of it is level with your baby's armpits.
- All harness straps should fit snugly, especially over the shoulder and thigh areas. Straps should always lie flat, never twisted. If you can pinch any harness webbing between your fingers, it's too loose.

Go to [NHTSA.GOV](https://www.nhtsa.gov) for more information. And be sure to read the instruction manuals for both your vehicle and for the convertible car seat before installation.