The Safest Ride At Every Age

The leading cause of death in children under the age of 18 in Idaho is unintentional injuries, many due to car crashes. Pediatricians and injury prevention specialist work hard to find the best ways to keep kids safe while riding in a car. This guide can be used to determine the safest way for your kids to ride at every age.

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<th>Age (Years)</th>
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<td>Rear-facing Car Seat</td>
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**Rear-facing Car Seat**

- Rear-facing car seats are the safest car seat a child can ride in because the head, neck, and spine are better protected in the case of a collision.
- Children should stay in a rear-facing seat as long as they fit within the height and weight limits. It is recommended that they stay in a rear-facing seat until at least the age of 2.
- If children start to grow out of the rear-facing seat before age 2, look for a different rear-facing seat with greater height and weight requirements. Contact your local car seat technicians for recommendations.

**Forward-facing Car Seat**

- If your child is over 2 years of age and has outgrown the height and weight requirements of their rear-facing car seat, they should move to a forward-facing car seat with a 5 point harness.
- Children should not move to a booster seat until they have outgrown the height and weight requirements and can be mature enough to sit correctly in a booster seat.
Booster Seat

- Booster seats are used when a child has outgrown a harness car seat, but is not quite big enough to use a seat belt.
- Booster seats are used to “boost” children up to allow the lap and shoulder belt to fit properly over their body.
- Children can move into a booster seat when they outgrow their forward-facing seat and stay seated without unbuckling.

Can Your Child Pass This 5-Step Seat Belt Checklist?

- Can your child sit with their back flat against back of the seat?
- Do their knees bend at the edge of the seat with their feet touching the floor?
- Does the lap belt lay flat over their thighs and not the stomach?
- Does the shoulder belt lay between their collarbone and shoulder?
- Can they sit properly the whole ride without moving around or unbuckling?

If your child can pass this 5-step checklist, they should be ready to sit in a vehicle using a seat belt.

For more information and resources go to http://www.idahoaap.org/

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®
Idaho Chapter

Seat Belt

- Kids should not move up to a seat belt until they are 4 feet 9 inches, typically occurring between 8-12 years of age. They should be able to pass the 5-step check first.
- Children should ride in the back seat until at least 13 years of age.
- No one should ride in the back of a pickup truck.
- Idaho law states you must wear your seat belt while riding in a motor vehicle.¹