

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Are you using a new car seat? Why do I need a new car seat?
 - The car seat that you are providing for your child must be safe. Used car seats with unknown or unreliable history (from second hand stores or online sales like Craigslist or Facebook) carry an unknown factor. Many times used seats have missing or worn out parts, or have been in incidents that the owners may consider insignificant but are not! If you cannot afford a new seat, consider borrowing or buying one from a friend, neighbor, relative, coworker or someone from your church family, someone that you trust, as long as they purchased it new or it was gifted to them new.
- If you have a used seat – do you know the history?
 - Did you borrow the seat from someone you trust with your child's life? Used seats can be missing important pieces or may have pieces that have been adapted from other seats- use with caution!
- Are you using items that did not come with the seat?
 - The way that safety seats come out of the box are the way that they are crash tested and must be used. Changing or adding anything will change how the seat provides protection in a motor vehicle incident.
- Are you using the 'pinch test' to fit the harness?
 - The harness should be snug enough so that there is no slack from hip to crotch and you cannot hold a pinch of webbing (with pincer fingers) between the armpit and top of shoulder while the harness wraps over the shoulder into the highest slot below the shoulder.
- Is the seat appropriate for your child's height, weight, age?
 - All car seats have a minimum and maximum height and weight. Generally, rear-facing-only seats begin at 4 or 5 pounds. Child safety seats are designed and crash tested with certain limits that dictate what size and weight child they can be certified.
- Is the vehicle's seat belt stiff, discolored or frayed?
 - Seat belts, especially in older vehicles take a lot of wear and tear. Combine children, animals, food and seatbelts can get stiff and difficult to use. Although it can take a while, a wet washcloth rinsed often can help alleviate much of the stiffness and make the belt easier to use.
- Is the harness folded, spotted, discolored or frayed?
 - If so, then the harness should be replaced before use. If the seat is needed before a new harness arrives, the harness can be cleaned with regular clothing detergent and tepid water in the kitchen sink. Do not use bleach, spot remover, starch or any other abrasive that can damage the harness strands.

- Does the seat move more than one inch after installation?
 - A correct installation allows the safety seat to have **up to** one inch of movement. Tightening the seatbelt or LATCH so tightly that it is difficult to remove can actually cause harm to the installation system.
- Did you read the vehicle and manual before installing the seat?
 - Working together, both manuals should be able to give you the information you need to correctly install your child's safety seat; including placement and use of seatbelt or LATCH.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children be rear facing until at least two years old.
 - Many safety seats can be rear facing to 40 or 50 or more pounds. Children experience more injuries to head, brain, arm and legs while forward facing. Keeping your child rear facing as long as possible will give the greatest level of safety available.
- Boosters **must always be used** with a lap and shoulder belt.
 - Check the instructions for the booster seat to see how the lap belt must be worn. The shoulder portion of the belt should fall across the hip, sternum and shoulder /collarbone area. If the booster seat your child is using does not assist the safety belt to fit correctly then it is not the correct seat for your child to use in your vehicle. Like safety seats, not all booster seats fit every child or every vehicle.