



**buckleupnc.org**  
Securing North Carolina for Life

# Get your car seat checked!

Did you know there are certified car seat technicians located throughout the state? These Technicians are specially trained to educate families on how to install and use their car seats correctly.

Give yourself the peace of mind of having your car seats checked by a trained professional. Find a program in your community by visiting [www.buckleupnc.org/locations](http://www.buckleupnc.org/locations).



## North Carolina Laws

North Carolina law should be considered the minimum requirement.

To keep kids as safe as possible in the car, see the recommendations on the other side of this card.

The basic requirements of N.C.'s car seat and seat belt laws are:

- All drivers and passengers, regardless of age, must be properly buckled up.
- Children younger than age 8 **and** who weigh less than 80 pounds must be in a car seat or booster seat.
- When a child reaches age 8 (regardless of weight) **or** 80 pounds (regardless of age), a correctly fitted seat belt may be used instead of a car seat or booster seat.
- Children younger than age 5 **and** who weigh less than 40 pounds must be in the rear seat, with some exceptions.
- Placing the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back is illegal and unsafe for children **and** adults.
- Children less than age 16 are prohibited from riding in the open bed of a pickup truck or other open cargo area.
- Drivers are legally responsible for themselves and all children less than age 16 in the vehicle. Passengers age 16 and older are legally responsible for themselves.

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# Car Seats: Am I using the right one?



## Keep kids rear-facing as long as possible.

- Kids should ride rear-facing as long as possible, at least until age 2.
- Rear-facing convertible car seats can be used for toddlers.
- Young kids are safer when rear-facing.
- Rear-facing car seats protect your child's neck and spine.



## Keep kids in a harnessed car seat as long as possible.

- When kids reach upper rear-facing limits, switch to a forward-facing seat.
- Don't switch to forward-facing too soon.
- The car seat harness keeps kids in the safest position.
- Use the top tether when forward-facing.
- The top tether keeps the car seat from moving too far forward in a crash.



## Use booster seats until seat belt fits on its own.

- Kids should ride in a harnessed car seat until they are big enough AND mature enough to ride in a booster seat.
- Seat belts are designed to fit adults. Booster seats position kids so that the seat belt fits properly - lap belt low on hips and shoulder belt across the collarbone.
- Kids can be seriously injured if the lap belt is too high on the stomach.
- If the shoulder belt is under the arm or behind the back it can't do its job.



## Older children should use seat belts all the time.

- Kids should stay in a booster seat until the seat belt fits properly on its own.
- A seat belt fits properly when the lap belt sits low on the hips and the shoulder belt crosses over the shoulder and collarbone.
- Kids should ride in the back seat until they are 13 years old.
- In a crash, a seat belt will keep you in your seat.
- If the shoulder belt is under the arm or behind the back it can't do its job.

*Images courtesy of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and check age, height, and weight requirements.

Find a car seat checking program:  
[www.buckleupnc.org/locations](http://www.buckleupnc.org/locations)

