



Caring for the
Next Generation

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Car Seat Recommendations and Laws: Texas

There is always confusion between car seat laws and car seat recommendations. Texas law only mandates that all children under 8 years must be restrained according to manufacturer recommendations. There is no minimum age a child must be to ride in the front seat; however a car seat manufacturer may prohibit installation in the front seat, thus making it illegal.

Regardless of the law, it is clear that the safest way to transport your child is to follow the following recommendations:

2013 Child Passenger Safety National Best Practice Recommendations

Phase 1	Rear-Facing Seats	Infants: Birth – 35+ pounds, 2+ years old. Rear-facing infant or rear-facing convertible safety seat as long as possible, up to the rear-facing height or weight limit of the seat. Properly install according to instructions in owner’s manual, rear-facing in the back seat.
Phase 2	Forward-facing Seats	When children outgrow the rear-facing safety seat (2+ years), they should ride in a forward-facing safety seat as long as possible, up to the upper height or weight limit (40 – 80+ pounds) of the harnesses. Usually 4+ years old. Properly installed forward-facing in the back seat. Never turn forward-facing before child meets all: AGE/HEIGHT/WEIGHT requirements set by safety seat manufacturer for forward-facing.
Phase 3	Booster Seats	After age 4 and 40+ pounds, children can ride in a booster seat with the adult lap and shoulder belt until the adult safety belt will fit them properly (usually when the child is 4'9" tall, 10 – 12 years old). MUST have a lap/shoulder belt to use a booster seat.
Phase 4	Adult Safety Belt	Once children outgrow their booster seat (usually at 4'9", 10 – 12 years) they can use the adult lap/shoulder safety belt if it fits them properly. Lap portion low over the hips/tops of thighs and shoulder belt crosses the center of the shoulder and center of the chest.

Children are better protected the longer they can stay in each phase. Keep children in each seat up to the **maximum** age/weight/height limits before moving to the next phase. **ALL** children younger than age 13 years should ride properly restrained in the back seat.