

## A Note on Child Passenger Safety

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Gone are the days of the boring summer road trips! Today's technologies allow children to have much more fun during car travel either watching movies, listening to their Ipod, or playing video games. Car travel with children can be both fun and safe provided that children are restrained properly.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued a new policy statement on child passenger safety which was published in the April issue of its journal, Pediatrics. Their four recommendations are based on new data in the United States as well as extensive experience in Sweden.

First, it is recommended all infants and toddlers should ride in rear-facing car safety seats until they are 2 years of age or have reached the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat's manufacturer. This represents a significant change from previous AAP policy. Most currently available car safety seats have weight limits for rear facing that can accommodate this new recommendation.

Second, it is recommended that all children older than 2 years should use a forward-facing car safety seat with a harness for as long as possible.

Third, all children who have outgrown their forward facing child safety seats should use a belt-positioning booster seat until they have reached a height of four feet, nine inches - usually when they are between 8 and 12 years of age. Children who have outgrown their booster seats should always use the lap and shoulder seat belts correctly.

Finally, it is recommended by the AAP that all children younger than 13 years should be restrained in the rear seats of vehicles.

Many communities have inspection stations where trained child passenger safety technicians help families install and use child safety seats correctly. A list of these stations is available at [seatcheck.org](http://seatcheck.org). By following these new guidelines, summer travel will be safe and enjoyable for the whole family.

**For an appointment with Dr. Casey, call  
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