

Why You Should Consider Rear-facing Your Child Past the Minimum of 1 Year and 20 Pounds

Every milestone in a child's life is exciting! Even car seat milestones seem exciting, but the truth is, every step in car seat "advancement" is actually reducing the protection your child receives.

Please consider the following information before moving your child forward facing:

AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) Policy

For optimal protection, the child should remain rear facing until reaching the maximum weight for the car safety seat, as long as the top of the head is below the top of the seat back <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;109/3/550>

Extending the period of time your child rear-faces in the car greatly reduces their risk of injury in an accident. Children who are forward facing are 4 times as likely to be injured in a crash than rear facing children. (MSN Article "Child Car Seat Advice Questioned" <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9916868/>)

1 year and 20lbs is the absolute minimum for forward facing children. Still, with this minimum standard reiterated to parents repeatedly, many parents are turning their babies forward facing too soon.

Automobile Accidents are the #1 killer of children under the age of 15. In the USA during 2005, 1,451 children ages 14 years and younger died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes, and approximately 203,000 were injured. That's an average of 4 deaths and 556 injuries each day. Of the children ages 0-14 years who were killed in motor vehicle crashes during 2005, nearly half were unrestrained. One study found that 72% of nearly 3,500 observed child restraint systems were misused in a way that could be expected to increase a child's risk of injury during a crash (NHTSA 2006)

Ensuring Correct Use: Always make sure your child's harness straps come from below the shoulders when Rear Facing (above the shoulders when Forward Facing). The harness should always be snug as a hug with no pinch-able slack, and the chest clip sits at armpit level. Rear Facing seats are not outgrown until the child reaches either the RF weight limit (30-35lbs, varies by seat) or their head is within 1" of the hard shell top of the seat.

Head Weight: When a child is in a forward-facing seat, there is tremendous stress put on the child's neck, which must hold the large head back. The mass of the head of a small child is about 25% of the body mass whereas the mass of the adult head is only 6%!..Rear-facing seats do a phenomenal job of protecting children because there is little or no force applied to the head, neck and spine. <http://www.cpsafety.com/articles/stayrearfacing.aspx>

When used properly, rear-facing carseats provide significant safety advantages in frontal, frontal offset and side impact crashes. According to www.crashtest.com, and the NHTSA, frontal and frontal offset crashes combine for about 72% of severe crashes. Side impacts are about 24%. Rear and rear offset crashes only account for about 4%. Rear-enders are more common at lower speeds, though most injuries in these crashes are not as severe; typically whiplash injuries to adults, especially passengers lacking proper head restraint. (www.car-safety.org) **Why RF is Safest Even in Rear End Collisions** 1 Family's Story of Being Rear-Ended While Stopped by a Car Traveling at 60-65mph <http://myangelsaliandpeanut.tripod.com/id5.html>

Rear-facing Child Restraints provide the best protection from injury for any child that can fit in one.

- SafetyBeltSafe USA technical encyclopedia, written by Kathleen Weber, retired Director of the Child Passenger Protection Research Program in the University of Michigan Medical School

The longer a child can ride rear-facing, the better protected his or her spinal cord is in the event of a collision. Joe Colella, Child Passenger Safety Training Manager for the National SAFE KIDS Campaign

Won't my child be uncomfortable? Where do his legs go?

Many parents have the misconception that children are uncomfortable or at risk for leg injury by having their legs up on the vehicle seat or bent when kept rear facing. Children are more flexible, what is perceived as uncomfortable is not. In reality, most children who are old enough to voice an opinion will tell you they are much more comfortable rear facing. Additionally, there are no documented cases of children's legs, hips, etc. breaking or being injured in a crash due to longer rear facing. Sadly, there are many cases of head and neck injury in forward-facing children that could have been prevented if the child had remained rear facing. However, even if a leg or hip were broken or injured, it can be fixed. A damaged spinal cord is much harder, if not impossible to repair.

Pictures of How a Child's Spine Develops

#1 There is a cervical vertebrae for a 1-year old (left), and beside it a cervical vertebrae for a 6 year old (right). Note that the 1-yr old's vertebrae is still in pieces.



#2 Thoracic vertebrae for a 1 yr old (left) and for a 6 yr old (right)

Note that the 1-yr old's vertebrae is still in pieces



#3 Lumbar vertebrae for a 1 yr old (left) and for a 6 yr old (right).

Note that the 1-yr old's vertebrae is still in pieces.



The vertebrae do not begin to fuse until age 3-6 years old. This is why rear-facing is the safest as it gives more support and protection to the incomplete vertebrae and therefore the spinal cord. With vertebrae in pieces, a forward facing child has a greater chance of damage to the spinal cord

For More Information on the Extensive Benefits of Rear Facing please visit the following web sites:
<http://www.cpsafety.com> www.childrestraintsafety.com www.car-safety.org www.thecarseatlady.com

Why You Should Consider Rear-facing Your Child Past the Minimum of 1 Year and 20 Pounds



Danielle, 18mo,26lbs



Jana 3.5 yrs, 31lbs39"



Jillian 3.5 yrs 33lbs



Natalie, 26mo 27lbs



Ella 3yr 29lbs 37.5"



Ean 3yr 26lbs, 36"



Brandon, 3.5 yr 42" tall



Jonathan 18mo 30lbs 33"



Addison 20mo 33"



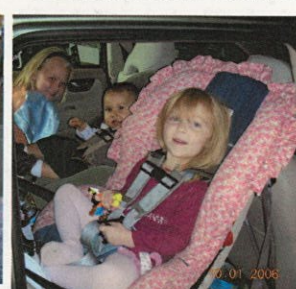
Quinn 5years 11 months



Ruthie 23 months, rear faced 4 times until 35lbs!



Jennalee 3yr3month



Drew 33mo 25lbs, 34"



Adalyn 15 mo 30"22lb



Shaun 21months



Owen 3.5 29lbs



Katy 18mo 30.5lbs 33.5"



2 yr 7mo 25lbs 37" tall



Natalie 20months, 24lbs



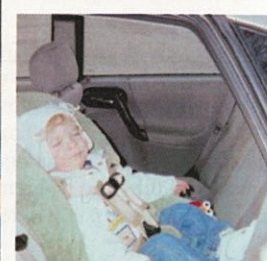
Ethan 17 months, 20lbs



Evie, 13 months, 25lbs



Kallie 2.5yr 26lb 37"



26months 23lbs 32"

All pictures reproduced with parental permission for the benefit of spreading the word!

For More Information on the Extensive Benefits of Rear Facing please visit the following web sites:
<http://www.cpsafety.com> www.childrestraintsafety.com www.car-safety.org www.thecarseatlady.com