

Car seats for babies and young children have been around for over 20 years. Even though car seats have been around for a long time, most parents still get confused and frustrated when installing their children's car seats.

What is the best car seat to use?

The answer to this question comes in three parts:

One that fits your child: – car seats are designed for children of different ages, weights and seated heights.

One that fits your car – car seats fit differently in many models of cars and trucks. The shape of the vehicle seat, the seat belt system and the size of the car seat will affect how well the car seat can be installed.



One that you will use correctly ALL THE TIME – car seats have many different features. All car seats must meet the same federal testing standard. The most expensive car seat may not be the best choice for you. It is important to buy a car seat that works best for you, your child and your vehicle.

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

- **NEVER** place a rear facing car seat in front of an air bag! This can cause death or severe injury! Babies need to ride rear facing until at least 12 months of age **AND must** weigh 20 pounds. Both benchmarks need to be in place before they can be turned forward facing.
- Harness fit is important. Retainer clips should be at armpit level. Straps should be **snug**; you should **not** be able to pinch **any** slack. Use lower shoulder slots for rear facing seats. Use upper shoulder slots for forward facing car seats.
- Read the **instructions** that come with your car seat. They will help you **use the car seat** correctly.
- Study your **vehicle owner's manual**. It will help you **install the car seat in your** vehicle the right way.
- **The Fire Department strongly discourages used car seats!** Used seats can have cracks, sun damage or missing parts. The average life of a car seat is five years.

Car seats and seat belts that have been involved in crashes **NEED TO BE REPLACED!** Contact your insurance company about replacing these items.



Contact Fire Department personnel for assistance in installing the car seats.

For more information about car seats for kids, call the

**Boca Grande Fire Department
(941) 964-2908**



Urban Survival

Life Safety Program



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360 E Railroad Ave
Boca Grande, FL 33921

941 964-2908