

# BEST PRACTICES FOR BUCKLING UP CHILDREN

To help you provide the safest way to travel with your child, the North Dakota Department of Health offers the following best practice recommendations:

Children younger than 13 should ride in the back seat.



## REAR-FACING

Children should ride rear-facing until at least 2 years of age. Two types of car seats are available for rear-facing:

**Infant Seats** – Most of these seats can be used until 22-35 pounds. Use them until the highest weight limit or until the child's head is within one inch of the top of the seat.

**Convertible Seats** – These seats can be used rear-facing and forward-facing. Most can be used rear-facing up to 30-40 pounds. Use them rear-facing until the highest weight or height limit allowed by the manufacturer.



## FORWARD-FACING

When children are at least 2 years of age or have outgrown the highest rear-facing limits of their car seat, they may ride forward-facing in a car seat with a harness. Use the seat until the child reaches the harness's highest weight limit allowed by the manufacturer. Car seats with harnesses can be used up to 40-100 pounds.



## BOOSTERS

When children have outgrown the harness in their forward-facing car seat, they may be moved to a booster. The child should be at least 40 pounds and at least 4 years of age. Keep the child in the booster until about 4'9" tall or the seat belt fits correctly over the child's body. Most boosters can be used up to 80-120 pounds.



## SEAT BELT

Children should use a seat belt when it fits over the body correctly. For a seat belt to fit properly, the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs and be snug across the shoulder and chest. It should not lie on the stomach or across the neck.

## FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY:

**Select** a car seat based on your child's age, size, development and maturity. Weight and height information will be on labels attached to the car seat and in the instruction manual.

**Register** your car seat, check for recalls and monitor the expiration date of the seat.

**Secure** your child in the seat snugly, following the car seat instructions.

**Install** the seat tightly in your vehicle using the seat belt OR lower anchors and tether (LATCH) system. Follow the car seat instructions and vehicle owner's manual.

Need help with your car seat? Visit a car seat checkup or child passenger safety technician for assistance.

Call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2286 (press 1) or go to [www.ndhealth.gov/injury/](http://www.ndhealth.gov/injury/) for a list of car seat checkups.



# North Dakota's Child Passenger Safety Law

- Children younger than 7 are required to ride in a child restraint (car seat or booster seat). The restraint must be used correctly – following the manufacturer's instructions.
- A seat belt may be substituted for children younger than 7 who weigh more than 80 pounds and are more than 57 (4'9") inches tall.
- A lap belt may be used by children who weigh more than 40 pounds who ride in vehicles with lap-only seat belts or if all lap and shoulder belts are used by other occupants. (This is because booster seats require both a lap and shoulder belt for correct use.)
- Children ages 7 through 17 must be properly secured in a seat belt or child restraint (car seat or booster seat).
- The law applies to all seating positions – front seat and back.
- The driver is responsible for ensuring that all occupants younger than 18 are buckled up in the appropriate restraint.
- The penalty for violation is \$25 and one point against the license of the driver.

*To help you select the right child restraint for your child, refer to best practice guidelines on back.*



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH  
Child Passenger Safety Program  
800.472.2286

