Car Seat Guidelines

INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing seat as long as possible until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat manufacturer.
- Most convertible seats have limits that allow children to ride rear-facing until at least 2 years of age.
- Rear-facing-only seats are used for infants up to 22 to 35 pounds and 26 to 35 inches, depending on the model. If your child outgrows these measurements, switch to a convertible car seat.

SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN AND OLDER

- All children whose weight or height exceeds the forward-facing limit for their car seat should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8-12 years of age.
- All children under the age of 13 should ride in the back seat.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- What if my child's feet touch the back of the vehicle seat?
  - This is very common and no need for concern. Children are very flexible and can easily find a comfortable position in a rear-facing seat. Injuries to the legs are very rare for children facing the rear
- What do I do if my child slouches down or to the side in the car seat?
  - Try placing a tightly rolled receiving blanket on both sides of your child. Many manufacturers allow the use of a tightly rolled small diaper or cloth between the crotch strap and your child, if necessary, to prevent slouching. Do not place padding under or behind your child or use any sort of car seat insert unless it comes with the seat or was made by the manufacturer for use with that specific seat.
- Why should I dress my child in thinner layers of clothing before strapping them into a car seat?
  - Bulky clothing, including winter coats and snowsuits, can compress in a crash and leave the straps too loose to restrain your child, leading to an increased risk of injury. Ideally, dress the baby in thinner layers and wrap a coat or blanket around your baby over the buckled harness straps if needed.

For more information, go to healthychildren.org