

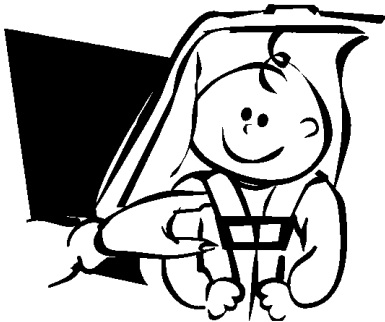
Securing your child in a car seat

The final step in using a car seat correctly, is properly securing your child in their seat. Properly adjusted harness straps will effectively restrain your child in their car seat in a collision. Your car seat manual will provide specific instructions on how to adjust and tighten the straps.



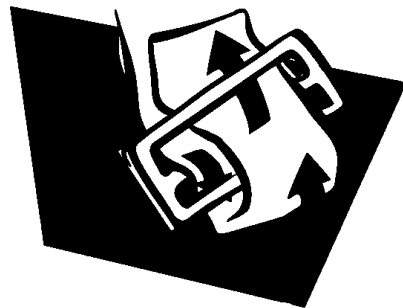
Seven facts about harnessing your child

1. The straps must lie flat across your child's body.



2. The harness straps should fit snug; only one finger should fit between the harness and your child's collar bone.

3. The chest clip should be at armpit level to hold the straps in place. For newborns, place the chest clip 8 cm (3") below their chin.
4. Rear-facing seats: straps must lie flat and come through **at or below** the shoulders. When changing the shoulder strap positions, be sure to thread them completely through the plastic shell, not just behind the pad.
5. Forward-facing seats: straps must lie flat and come through **at or above** their shoulders; the straps of most models must be in the top-most slots. Refer to the car seat manual.
6. Never put additional padding under or behind your child. This extra padding will compress during a collision, creating dangerous slack in the harnessing.
7. All harness straps that go through a strap slide must be "doubled back" to make sure that they do not slip.



Installing & Using Your Car Seat Properly

For more information, call:

YORK REGION
Health Connection
Health Information • Education • Counselling
1-800-361-5653



Based on the car seat clinics held in York Region since 1998, 92% of the car seats checked were used incorrectly. After selecting the appropriate seat for your child's weight, height, and developmental ability, properly installing the seat in your vehicle is the second important step to ensuring your child is riding safe. Both your vehicle manual and the car seat manual will provide important information regarding the proper installation of your car seat.

How tightly should a car seat be installed?

The lap part of the belt holds the car seat firmly in place. To make it tight, push the car seat down into the vehicle seat while you tighten the belt around it - kneel/push down on it with your full weight.



To check for a tight fit,

try to pull the car seat away from the vehicle back and slide it from side to side where the seat is belted. The seat belt should not loosen and the base of the car seat should have less than one inch movement in all directions.



Installing a car seat using a seat belt



Look for a label on the belt telling how to keep it tight.

Which kinds of belts are in your vehicle?

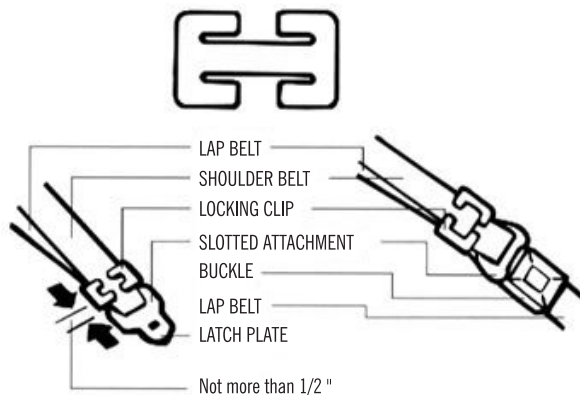
Lap belts only hold the hips. Lap/shoulder belts hold the hips, chest and one shoulder. There are also several kinds of retractors to take up slack in the seat belt and latchplates that the buckle fits into. Read your vehicle manual to find out what type(s) of seat belts are in your vehicle.

Lap/shoulder belt with a free-sliding latchplate:

Many vehicles have lap/shoulder belts that by fully extending the seat belt out of the retractor it switches into a locking mode to install a car seat. However, some vehicles have lap/shoulder belts that only lock in a crash or sudden stop. To secure this type of seat belt around a car seat, a metal "locking clip" is required. Your vehicle manual and often a seat belt label will let you know if you need a locking clip.

How to install a locking clip:

1. Put the belt through the correct path on the car seat and buckle it.
2. Push down on the car seat, and pull up on the shoulder end of the belt until the lap belt is pulled tight.
3. Hold the two parts of the belt together at the latchplate and unbuckle it.
4. Thread the belt through the locking clip within 1/2 inch of the latch plate.
5. Buckle the belt again.
6. Remove the locking clip when you don't have a car seat installed.



Some vehicles need a heavy duty locking clip which is only supplied by the vehicle manufacturer. Refer to your owner's manual.

LATCH: An alternate way to install car seats

The LATCH (Lower Anchorage and Tether for Children) system, also called ISOFIX or UAS (Universal Attachment System), exists for all new vehicles and car seats manufactured after September 1, 2002. You can choose to use this new system if your vehicle and car seat have the LATCH system. Otherwise, continue to use the seat belts to install car seats. Do not use the LATCH system together with the seat belt - choose the system that offers the tightest fit.

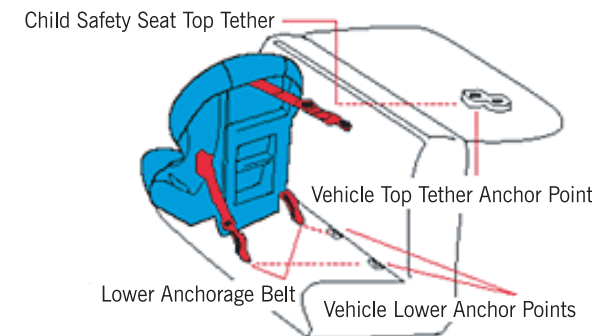
For vehicles, each LATCH position consists of two small bars built into the crease of the vehicle seat - refer to your vehicle manual to find out where LATCH positions are located.



New car seats come with a separate strap with hooks that will clip onto the LATCH anchors in the vehicle. Refer to the car seat manual for information about the proper way to attach the hooks to the anchors.

Installing a car seat with LATCH:

1. Position car seat, rear-facing or forward-facing, according to car seat instructions
2. Thread LATCH strap through proper routing on the car seat, keeping strap flat
3. Hook LATCH strap to vehicle anchors. Kneel into the car seat and tighten strap by pulling the loose end of the strap
4. For forward facing car seats, attach the tether strap to the tether anchor and pull tight



If you are buying a retrofit LATCH kit for car seats manufactured before September 1, 2002, make sure you purchase the kit made by the same car seat manufacturer.

Tethering (Forward-facing only)

A top tether strap anchors the upper part of a forward-facing car seat to the frame of the vehicle and limits how far forward a car seat can move in a collision.

The tether strap needs to be as tight as possible - kneel/push down on the car seat while tightening the strap. If the tether has strap slides, check your car seat manual for the proper way to double-back the strap, otherwise the tether will loosen with the force of a collision.

Check the vehicle owner's manual for tether anchor locations. Newer vehicles will have user-ready tether anchors. Many older model vehicles will have pre-drilled holes - contact your vehicle dealership to get more details about installing an anchor bolt.

