

Tip #4

what safety seat to use

for a big baby or toddler?

When your baby grows too tall or too heavy for an infant-only seat, you'll need a larger seat.

Big Baby:

Convertible seats fit infants rear facing up to about 20 lbs. Some convertible seats are rated for heavier rear facing weights and should be used for infants less than 1 year who weigh over 20 lbs (A).

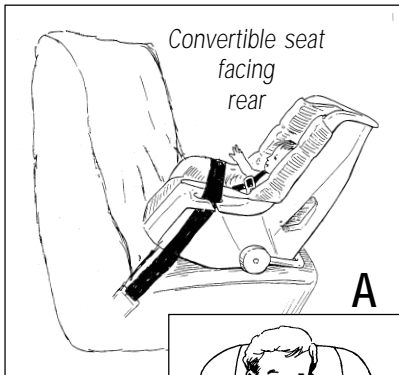
Toddler:

Children over age 1, who weigh at least 20 lbs. face forward in a convertible seat (B). Forward-facing child vest (C) or seat (D) are for children over age one and at least 20 pounds. These products hold children of varying sizes. Be sure to read the label and instructions. Some convert from a toddler type seat with a harness to a belt-positioning booster (D). Some are built into the vehicle seat. A full harness should be used to about 40 lbs.

Warning: Most toddlers are not big enough or old enough for a booster seat. They need a full harness to give protection for the upper body and to hold them in their seats. A full harness should be used to about 40 lbs.

When choosing a safety seat, remember:

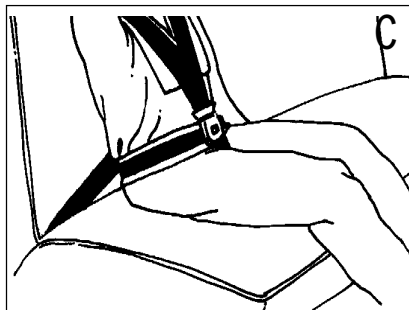
- A seat that is easy to install and use will be the best for you and your child. Find and read the instruction booklet.
- Look for a convertible seat that has a higher weight limit in the rear-facing position if your baby is less than 1 year and over 20 lbs.
- Try locking and releasing the buckle in the store. Try changing the length of the straps. Some harnesses adjust automatically to fit the child. Many can be adjusted easily from the front or the side. Others have a metal adjustment slide through which you must pull the straps.
- If the seat has a metal slide adjustor, you must thread the strap up and down through the openings, then back through the first slot (E) to "lock" it every time you adjust the harness. This keeps the strap from pulling through the slide in a crash, which would allow the child to be thrown out.
- Try the seat in your vehicle. Most safety seats fit better into some vehicles than others. Cars with bucket seats or small rear seats may present problems.



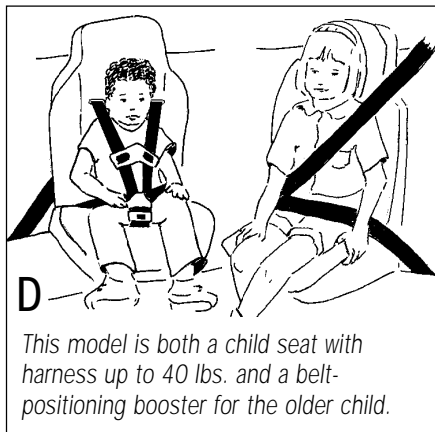
Convertible safety seats can be used for big babies and toddlers.



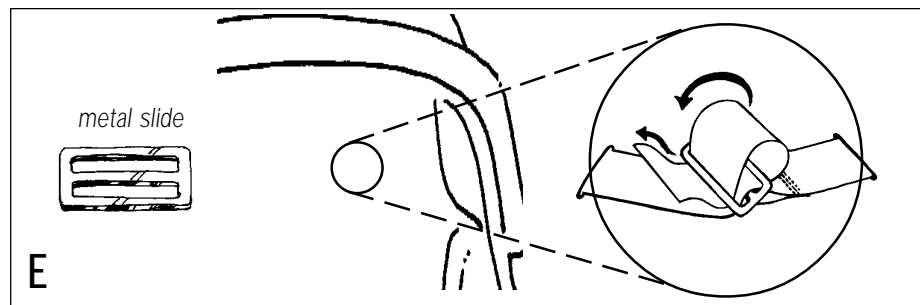
Same convertible seat facing forward for child over 1 year and over 20 lbs.



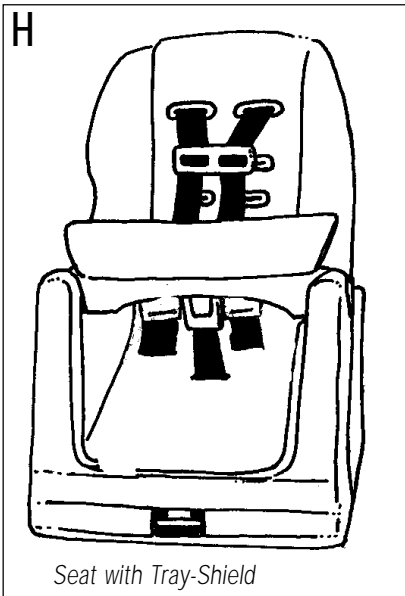
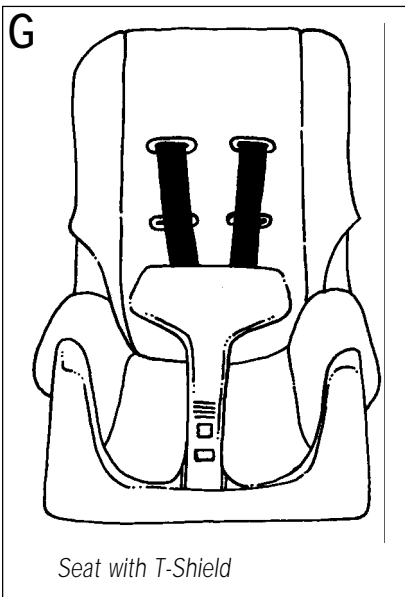
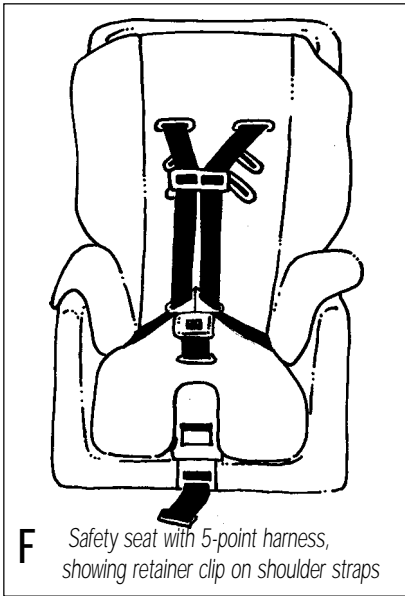
Vest has shoulder, hip, and crotch straps. Vehicle belt goes through the back of the vest. Some require a top tether.



This model is both a child seat with harness up to 40 lbs. and a belt-positioning booster for the older child.



Strap on metal slide adjustor must be threaded back through the slide to hold tight.



Which kind of harness is best?

There are three kinds. The basic 5-point harness has shoulder, hip, and crotch straps. The T-shield or tray-shield takes the place of hip straps to hold the lower body in the seat. Most seats come with a plastic **harness retainer clip** that holds the two shoulder straps together. Keep it at armpit level on your child to hold the harness straps on the shoulders. Special features of harnesses follow:

5-Point Harness

A 5-point harness (F) is preferred by many safety experts because the lap part of the harness fits over the child's strong hip bones. This kind of harness can be adjusted to fit snugly on both very small infants and larger children. However, the straps may twist and tangle. Keep the straps flat for maximum protection.

T-Shield

Shoulder straps are attached to a flat pad (G). The shield reduces twisting of shoulder straps. It can be buckled quickly with one hand. Some have straps that adjust automatically to fit properly.

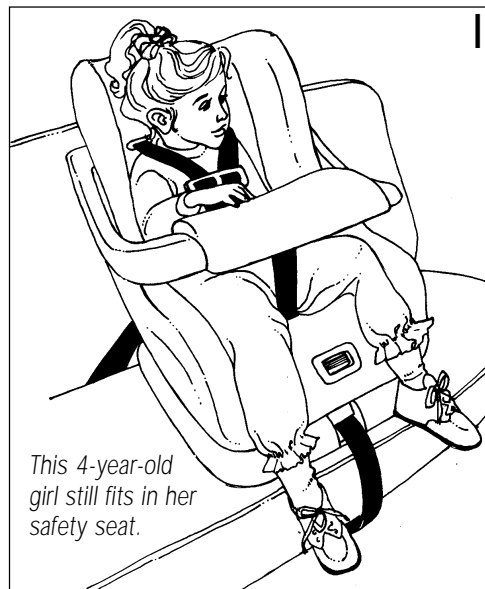
Tray-Shield

Shoulder straps are attached to a wide, padded shield (H) that swings up. Some shields may not fit over the child's head unless the straps are adjusted each time. This may give you the mistaken idea that your child has outgrown the seat. In some cars, the roof may be too low to allow you to raise the shield completely.

When you use a convertible seat, remember:

Keep it facing the rear as long as possible, until your baby is about one year old and weighs at least 20 pounds. Some convertible seats have rear facing weight limits to 30 lbs.

- Use the upright position when it is facing forward for children over 1 year and at least 20 lbs.
- Move up the harness straps. They must be at or above your child's shoulders. Most seats require use of the top-most slots for the forward-facing position. The top slots are reinforced to prevent the harness from failing in a crash. A few



allow use of the center slots; check weight limits in the instructions.

- Use the correct belt path for forward-facing installation.
- **Keep your child up to 40 pounds in a safety seat with a harness (I).** When the child's shoulders are above the top harness slots, move her to an auto booster seat that helps safety belts fit properly (Tip 5).
- Always follow the instructions that came with your child's seat.