

Many injuries happen in predictable, preventable ways.

Almost every child will try to get out of his or her car seat at some time.

Starting early, being consistent and firm, and allowing the child to have fun are all ways of keeping a child happy and safe in a car seat.

Tips for Keeping your Child Happy in a Car Seat

- **Start Early** – Your infant's first ride should be a safe trip home. Children who start out in car seats as infants, and ride in seats on every trip, are much easier to keep in their seats when they become toddlers and preschoolers, or in seat belts when they get older.
- **Be Consistent** – Always buckle your child into a child safety seat. Not using the child safety seat--even on short trips--confuses the child and is unsafe.
- **Be A Role Model** – Children often copy what they see. Parents who regularly buckle up will more than likely have children that will do the same.
- **Be Firm** – When a child tries to get out of his or her car seat, **Don't panic!** When this happens, stop the car. Talk to the child in a firm, serious voice; then buckle the child up again in the safety seat. Repeat this as often as needed. The child will learn that you will not let him or her ride without being buckled up.
- **Have Fun!** – Pat your child, sing, hum, play favorite songs and stories and play games. On long trips, stop regularly to change positions and diapers or feed the child.

These tips will help make your child more comfortable and happy.

Tried and True Entertainment in the Car

- Infants:
 - Someone sitting close, talking or singing
 - Pictures or stickers to look at
 - Soft, colorful rattles
 - Soft teethingers
 - Soft photo books
- Toddlers:
 - Stickers
 - Dolls or stuffed animals
 - Cars
 - Soft books, books and more books!
 - Songs and stories, especially sing-alongs
 - Puppets
 - Flannel boards
 - Postcards
 - Healthy and nutritious snacks
- Five to Nine Year-Olds:
 - In addition to providing some of the items listed above, let them be on the "Buckle Up Patrol" and make sure that everyone in the car buckles up.

Adapted from the Pennsylvania Child Passenger Safety Project, in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Protecting our own: community child passenger safety programs*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT HS 807 599), July 1990.
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Child passenger safety resource manual*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation, 1991.

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