



## Parent Education Handout- April 2010

### Updated Car Seat Requirements

from [healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org) (site sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics)

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families-2010.aspx>

Age Group	Type of seat	General Guidelines
<b>Infants</b>	Infant seats and rear-facing convertible seats	Infants should ride rear-facing until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer. At a minimum, children should ride rear-facing until they have reached at least 1 year of age <i>and</i> weigh at least 20 pounds. When children reach the highest weight or length allowed by the manufacturer of their infant-only seat, they should continue to ride rear-facing in a convertible seat.
<b>Toddlers/preschoolers</b>	Convertible seats and forward-facing seats with harnesses	It is best for children to ride rear-facing as long as possible to the highest weight and height allowed by the manufacturer of their convertible seat. When they have outgrown the seat rear-facing, they should use a forward-facing seat with a full harness as long as they fit.
<b>School-aged children</b>	Booster seats	Booster seats are for older children who have outgrown their forward-facing car safety seats. Children should stay in a booster seat until adult belts fit correctly (usually when a child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 and 12 years of age).
<b>Older children</b>	Seat Belts	Children who have outgrown their booster seats should ride in a lap and shoulder seat belt in the back seat until 13 years of age.

# Texas State Law

## New Booster Seat Law Clarified

([http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director\\_staff/public\\_information/pr060209.pdf](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director_staff/public_information/pr060209.pdf))

Released June 2, 2009

There has been some confusion about a new state law that requires all children younger than eight (8) years old, UNLESS taller than 4'9" to be in child passenger safety seat system. ("Child passenger safety seat system" includes traditional car seats with harnesses AND booster seats – both high-back and backless versions.)

The law also requires all safety seats and booster seats to be installed according to the instructions of the manufacturer of the safety seat system.

Because of the changes of the wording in the law (SB61), the following legal interpretation should be applied:

- Once a child reaches eight (8) years old, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.
- If the child is younger than eight years old, BUT they are already 4'9" tall, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.
- If a child is eight years old or older, and not yet 4'9" tall, they are **not legally** required to be in a child safety seat system.

The law also requires that safety and booster seats be installed and used according to the manufacturer's instructions, including age, height and weight requirements and the placement in the vehicle. (Some manufacturers prohibit using their products on the front seats of vehicles.)

The other part of the law that may cause some confusion are the dates of when the law takes effect and when the enforcement phase begins.

The law will take effect September 1, 2009. Law enforcement officers may only enforce the new changes in the law with written or verbal warnings until June 1, 2010.

However, beginning on June 1, 2010, officers may then arrest or issue a citation/notice to appear to a person committing an offense.

A fine of not more than \$25 can be assessed for a first offense and no more than \$250 for the second or subsequent offenses.

*For a recorded sound bite on this topic, call 512-424-2606* **Read about DPS online at [www.txdps.state.tx.us](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us)**

This extra time between the effective date and the written offense date is to allow parents and caregivers ample time to become educated about, and obtain, the required safety seats or booster seats.

Vehicle manufacturers design their products for adults – not kids – and they support keeping kids in the appropriate safety or booster seat until the child can properly wear the adult safety belt...typically when they reach 4'9" tall.

Once your child has reached eight years old, to know when they can wear an adult seat belt properly without a booster seat, use this simple test:

Have your child sit on the vehicle seat, sitting all the way back, with their back straight against the back of the seat, and buckle the lap/shoulder belt over them.

1. Do their legs bend naturally at the knees over the edge of the seat?
2. Does the lap portion of the belt fit low over the hips and top of their thighs?
3. Does the shoulder portion of the belt fit across the center of their chest?

If the answer to any of these three questions is no, the child may be better protected in a booster seat.

A child in a poorly-fitting adult seat belt usually slumps down, allowing the seat belt to ride up into their abdomen or neck, which can cause severe injuries to the child's neck and internal organs during a car crash.

Although there is no law that prevents youngsters from sitting in the front seat of a vehicle, the safest place for a child in a car is in a rear seat, properly buckled into a child safety seat or a booster seat.

Air bags don't replace child safety seats and may increase the risk of serious injury to children. Children younger than 13 should never ride in the front seats of vehicles with active passenger air bags. If you do have to transport a child in the front seat in an emergency – make sure the front seat is moved all the way back on the track, placing as much room as possible between the deployment zone of the air bag and the vehicle seat...but NEVER place a rear-facing safety seat on a front seat.

A final, but very important note: please read and follow the instructions in both the safety/booster seat owner's manual AND the vehicle owner's manual. Not all safety or booster seats fit the same in all vehicles – so you may have to try several before finding a good fit for your child and vehicle.

If you have any questions, please contact Beth Warren, DPS Administrative Training Unit, Safety Programs at 512-424-5639 or [beth.warren@txdps.state.tx.us](mailto:beth.warren@txdps.state.tx.us).

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## Reader Question: Do Car Seats Expire?

Wednesday July 12, 2006

TAKEN FROM <http://babyproducts.about.com/b/2006/07/12/reader-question-do-car-seats-expire.htm>

*Q: I have a [used car seat](#) that is in great condition. The cover even looks new. I listed this car seat on my local Freecycle group, and now I'm getting emails from people who say that the car seat is expired and is dangerous and should be destroyed. I bought the car seat in 1999. I wouldn't sell it if it was obviously dangerous, but I don't see how a car seat in perfectly good condition should be thrown away.*

A: To answer your first question, yes, car seats do expire. In fact, most car seats have an expiration date on one of the manufacturer labels that can be found on the sides or bottom of the car seat. To find out if a car seat is expired, you should look for that expiration date label first. If there's no expiration date listed, use the date of manufacture and consult the car seat owners' manual. Many manufacturers give a maximum car seat life in the manual. If not, call the manufacturer and ask.

The rule of thumb, if no expiration date is given on the seat, is that car seats expire six years from the date of manufacture. Assuming that your car seat was manufactured in 1999, when you purchased it, yes, it is expired. A few car seat manufacturers allow up to 10 years of life for their car seats, but unless you have specific directions from the manufacturer, the car seat label or the manual that state otherwise, you should stop using a car seat after 6 years. Expired car seats should be destroyed so that no one picks the seat up thinking that it is still safe to use. Good ways to destroy car seats include cutting up the cover, cutting the harness straps, and using a saw or large hammer to break the shell. If you can actually watch the car seat go into a garbage truck and watch it be crushed, this is a good option, too.

One very good reason to stick to manufacturer's car seat expiration dates is that crash data and tests are constantly being used to make changes to car seats so they can do a better job of protecting children in crashes. Using a car seat that is many years old could mean your baby's car seat isn't utilizing newer technologies that could be lifesaving in a crash, or it could be out of date in terms of safety standards. Older car seats are also more likely to have been involved in a recall that was missed, which could mean there's a dangerous problem with the seat. Giving car seats an expiration date isn't about money. It's about making sure your child's car seat is as safe as possible.

While I can understand the frustration of throwing away something that still looks good, it's important to understand that the breakdown of a car seat is not something that can always be seen with the naked eye. Car seats are made of plastics. Consider what happens to a plastic toy if it is left outside for some time. The plastic becomes brittle and can develop cracks when stressed. Car seats are subjected to extreme heat and extreme cold while sitting in your vehicle, so the plastics eventually react just like that toy left in the sun.

You may not be able to see that the plastic is breaking down, or is more brittle, but that change could be dangerous in a crash when the car seat shell is stressed. You can see this problem in action by watching [this crash test video](#) of an expired car seat. In the video, the car seat harness breaks through the shell of the seat upon impact. This car seat would not have adequately protected a child in a crash. It's far safer for parents to [buy a new car seat](#) than to take a chance on a car seat that may be too old to function properly in a crash.

*Heather Corley is a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician.*

**Have Your Car Seat Inspected Today by one of the  
Certified Car Seat Installation Services Provided **BELOW!**  
or Call 1-866-SEAT-CHECK**

<http://www.cruisinwithkids.com/TexasChildandInfantCarSeatSafetyInspectionStations.html>

**Car Seat Consulting**

P O Box 1341  
Allen, TX 75013  
Located in Collin county serving Dallas & Collin counties  
phone: 972-890-8510  
Lucie Spencer

**Children's Medical Dallas/Safe Kids Dallas**

1935 Motor St. -Trauma Services  
Dallas, TX 75235  
Located in Dallas county serving Dallas, Collins counties  
phone: 214-456-2059  
Martha Maldonado  
By Appointment Only-please call to schedule-Spanish  
Speaking

**Injury Prevention Center of Dallas**

5000 Harry Hines Suite 101  
Dallas, TX 75235  
Located in Dallas county serving Dallas, Collins counties  
phone: 214-590-4400  
Lisa Padilla  
Spanish Speaking

**Denton Police Department**

601 E Hickory St. Suite # E  
Denton, TX 76205  
Located in Denton county serving Denton, Wise counties  
phone: 940-349-8181

**Safe Kids Tarrant County**

801 Seventh Avenue  
Fort Worth, TX 76104  
Located in Tarrant county serving Tarrant counties  
phone: 682-885-4244  
Sharon Evans  
Spanish Speaking

**City of Fort Worth Health Department - Car Seat Safety  
Program**

1800 University # 220  
Fort Worth, TX 76107  
Located in Tarrant county serving Tarrant counties  
phone: 817-871-7240  
Olga Loza  
Spanish Speaking

**Toby Stanaland Presbyterian Hospital of Plano**

6200 W. Parker Road  
Plano, TX 75093  
phone: 1-800-477-3729  
phone: 972-981-8627  
Safe Kids Collins County Coordinator Miriam Wilhem  
Spanish Speaking

**Southlake Fire Dept. - West Facility**

2100 W. Southlake Blvd.  
Southlake, TX 76092  
Located in Tarrant county serving Tarrant, Denton counties  
phone: 817-481 - 8316  
Shawn Fannan



## UPCOMING PARENT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AROUND DFW

**Baylor Medical Center of Carrollton** - 1-800-945-7997

<http://www.baylorhealth.com/PhysiciansLocations/Carrollton/Pages/ClassorEventatCarrollton.aspx>

Infant and Child CPR Classes – all classes start at 7 pm – COST \$25

4/21/10

5/19/10

**Texas Health Resources (Presbyterian Hospitals, Arlington Memorial Hospital, Harris Methodist Hospitals)** – Classes include baby sign language, grandparenting, carseat safety, infant and toddler nutrition, pediatric and adult CPR, stroller fitness, prenatal yoga

[http://www.texashealth.org/body\\_secure.cfm?id=562&oTopID=562](http://www.texashealth.org/body_secure.cfm?id=562&oTopID=562)

**Salesmanship Club** - Various Parenting Classes offered at, including Love and Logic

[http://www.salesmanshipclub.org/parent\\_education.aspx](http://www.salesmanshipclub.org/parent_education.aspx)

**Lewisville ISD** - <http://www.lisd.net/commed/200910.pdf>

CPR Classes and other adult education programs

**'Becoming a Love and Logic Parent' classes available**

Parents who have children of all ages are invited to attend the "Love and Logic" parenting classes April 8, 15 and 22. Classes are free and available in Spanish. During the class, parents will learn the "how-tos" of successful parenting, how to promote positive changes in your child's behavior and how to motivate your children to be more responsible. Multiple times and locations are available. For more information, call 469-948-8680.

**Carrollton Farmers-Branch ISD - Community Education** <http://www.cfbisd.edu/pages/studentsSTSParentEducation.cfm>

**LUNCH AND LEARN THURSDAYS** – 12 – 1 pm *for a free lunch as we talk about parenting issues that are relevant to all of us! Child care provided*

All Classes are held at the Community Learning Center Bldg B.

1820 Pearl St., Carrollton, TX 75006

**Contact:** J. Gail Gibson [gibsonj@cfbisd.edu](mailto:gibsonj@cfbisd.edu)

April 2010

1st . . . . . Meet Media Expert, John Karstetter

8th . . . . . Staying Safe Online, Mandy Griffith, Assistant US Attorney

15th . . . . . The Effects of Media on our Children

22nd . . . . . Cyberbullying, Sexting...What is it and What Parents can do to Stop it!

29th . . . . . Internet Safety (FBI Expert on Internet Safety for our Children)

**City of Carrollton – Leisure Connections Magazine** – various educational classes and activities for

kids and adults <https://www.cityofcarrollton.com/modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=4126>

**Parent Coaching and Parenting Classes – Kristy Dixon – ACPI Certified Coach for Parents**

[www.pureparenting.vpweb.com](http://www.pureparenting.vpweb.com)

**“Parenting with Love and Logic” Classes With Brenda Bird** ([www.brendabird.com](http://www.brendabird.com))

For parents of all ages: Laugh and learn new skills to help you in your quest to raise responsible kids who become capable, confident adults!

**3 Week Series: Choose daytime class OR evening class**

**Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.: April 6, 13, 20**

**Wednesdays from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.: April 7, 14, 21**

\$50.00 per person for each series, \$60 per couple

Optional workbooks can be purchased for \$10.00

Classes will be held at **Trinity Valley Church**

**3114 Old Denton Road, Carrollton, TX 75007**

Please register by March 31 by mailing your check payable to

Brenda Bird

2321 Castle Rock Road, Carrollton, TX 75007