****Which is the Right Car Seat

For Your Baby?

The Safety Squad team (safetysquad.com) works with car seats every day... in cars. We have educated more than 11,000 families in the Chicago-land area. The following is the best advice you'll get:

1. Don't buy a convertible seat for a newborn (AKA toddler seat). The harness slots are too high for almost all newborns and it is difficult to get a good fit.

2. Buy an infant seat with a built in lock-off. A lock-off will make installation in the middle easier and safer for baby. Baby is 43% safer in the middle of the back seat, than in one of the outboard positions.

3. Buy an infant seat with both a low starting weight and a high end weight/height.  "4 lbs to 30+ lbs".  Even full-term babies will fit better in these seats. Purchasing a higher weight seat is a better value for your money and encourages the much safer, rear-facing position since infant seats can only be used rear-facing. Rear facing is 5X safer than forward facing. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends rear-facing at least until the child’s second birthday.

4. Don't worry about stroller compatibility with your infant car seat. If it happens to be compatible with your stroller, great, but don't abuse it. Babies get flat-head and breathing issues when they spend too much time in car seats. Take your baby out of the car seat carrier when you are done traveling.

5. Get instruction from a professional car seat technician. 4 out of 5 educated, well-meaning parents use their car seat incorrectly. Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death and injury in young children. Car seats only protect your child if they are installed and used properly. You’ll do better with one of the below choices, but they don’t install themselves.

**Safety Squad’s top two picks for infant car seats:**
1. Chicco Keyfit 30
2. [Britax](http://www.britaxusa.com/car-seats/chaperone) Chaperone
**For families without a car (iGo, Zipcar, Rental, Taxi)**
1. The Combi Shuttle 33 (<http://www.combiusa.com/Products/Item.aspx?Item=53>) is ultra-lightweight and has rebound bar built into the carrier. It is an amazing fit while traveling.

Written by: Kim Wilschek, RN, CCE

Kim is the chief learning officer for Safety Squad, LLC. Safety Squad provides private car seat training for families at several locations throughout the Chicagoland area. [www.safetysquad.com](http://www.safetysquad.com) or [www.facebook.com/safetysquad](http://www.facebook.com/safetysquad).