

Car seat safety: Front vs. rear facing (Broadcast)

INTRO:

PARENTS HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS WHEN CHOOSING THE SAFEST CAR SEAT FOR THEIR KIDS. ONE PARTICULAR DECISION – IS WHEN TO MAKE THE SWITCH FROM REAR TO FRONT FACING.

TAKE VO

THERE'S NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL ANSWER – BUT CINDY HAMILTON... THE CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY PROGRAM COORDINATOR AT THE OSF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF ILLINOIS... HAS SOME CONSISTENT GUIDELINES PARENTS CAN FOLLOW.

FIRST – THE CHILD WANTS TO MAX OUT THE HEIGHT AND WEIGHT FOR THE REAR-FACING SEAT THEY'RE IN... WHICH IS GOING TO DIFFER BASED ON THE MANUFACTURER. SO... PAY ATTENTION TO THE GUIDELINES FROM YOUR CAR SEAT'S MANUFACTURER. THE STATE OF ILLINOIS REQUIRES CHILDREN TO BE REAR FACING AT LEAST UNTIL THEY'RE TWO YEARS OLD... HOWEVER... THE NATIONAL TRAFFIC HIGHWAY SAFETY ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDS KEEPING KIDS REAR FACING UNTIL THEY'RE THREE. HAMILTON SAYS IF YOU'RE IN A CAR CRASH – THE SHELL OF THE BODY OF THE REAR-FACING SEAT WILL ABSORB THE SHOCK. IT PROTECTS THE HEAD... NECK... AND SPINE MORE THAN WHEN YOUR CHILD IS FRONT FACING.

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"A lot of parents might say 'well my child is uncomfortable, their legs are long, but they're still not two,' or they're low in the weight range. Our best advice is that you can heal from a leg injury. A spinal cord, neck or brain injury, maybe not. So that's a key determiner of keeping them rear facing," Hamilton says.

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WHEN YOU MAKE THE SWITCH FROM REAR TO FRONT FACING – HAMILTON SAYS TO MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD HAS FULL CONTROL OF THEIR HEAD AND NECK. OSF HEALTHCARE OFFERS A LOW-COST CAR SEAT PROGRAM. FOR FAMILIES WHO NEED A CAR SEAT – YOU CAN CALL 1-877-277-6543. THERE ARE ALSO COMMUNITY CAR SEAT CHECKS AND FREE CAR SEAT INSTALLATION EVENTS HELD ACROSS CENTRAL ILLINOIS.