

Back to School Pedestrian Safety



An end to the summer heat may not be in sight for at least another month, but summer vacation is quickly coming to an end for millions of Florida's kids. Ready or not, over the next couple of weeks, children and teens will be headed back to school. That means a significant increase in kids on our state's roadways. Whether they are beginning drivers headed to the nearest high school; or child passengers in cars or school buses; or walkers and bike riders on sidewalks, roadways, or streets -- kids are on the roads in the mornings and afternoons Monday through Friday. **Kids will be out there on the move – and safety is often the last thing on their minds.**

The act of getting to and from school has the greatest potential for danger than any other single act performed during the school day. To help ensure kids have the safest transportation experience possible, it is important that parents learn transportation safety tips and relay this information to their children and teenagers, as well as teach the importance of personal responsibility. **Teach your children to be alert and stay aware of their surroundings, whether getting on or off the bus, riding a bike, walking down the street, or driving to school.**

Tips for Motorists:

- Slow down and obey all traffic laws and speed limits.
- Be alert for school zones that have a reduced speed limit at designated times of the day.
- Watch for school buses. Red flashing lights and an extended stop arm indicate the school bus is stopping to load or unload children. State law requires you to stop.
- Keep an eye out for children walking in the street, especially where there are no sidewalks.
- Be alert for children playing and gathering near bus stops and for those who may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch for children walking or biking to school.
- When driving in neighborhoods or school zones, watch for young people who may be in a hurry to get to school and may not be thinking about getting there safely.



September is Child Passenger Safety Month!

Infants: If my child is under age 1: Rear-facing Car Seat

- She always rides in the back seat & never in front of an air bag.
- Her car seat is buckled tightly in the car & doesn't move more than one when I pull on it at the belt path.
- The straps are snug on her & I can't pinch a pleat on the strap.



For the best possible protection keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until a minimum of age 1 and at least 20 pounds.

Toddlers: If my child is at least 1 year and weighs 20-40 pounds: Forward-facing car seat



- He always rides in the back seat & never in front of an air bag.
- His car seat is buckled tightly in the car & doesn't move more than one inch when I pull on it at the belt path.
- The straps are snug on him & I can't pinch a pleat on the strap

When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at a minimum age 1 and at least 20 pounds) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds).

Young Kids: If my child is under age 8 and over 40 pounds: Booster Seats

- She always rides in the back seat & never in front of an air bag.
- She always rides in a booster seat.
- I have both lap & shoulder belts in the back seat of my car.
- The lap belt rests on my child's hips, not on her stomach.
- The shoulder belt is on my child's shoulder, not on her neck.
- The safety belt is snug, flat & comfortable on my child.



Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall).

Older Kids: If my child is 8 years or older: Safety belts

- He always rides in the back seat & never in front of an air bag.
- He always uses a safety belt.
- I have both lap & shoulder belts in the back seat of my car.
- The lap belt rests on my child's hips, not on his stomach.
- The shoulder belt is on my child's shoulder, not on his neck, under his arm or behind him.
- The safety belt is snug, flat & comfortable on my child.

We strongly recommend that parents have their child's car seat checked by a nationally certified child passenger safety technician. In Pinellas County call: 727-892-KIDS.