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INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Rules of the road: Make sure grandchildren are restrained in your car

Whether you're driving your grandchildren around town or are taking them on a cross-country road trip, it's crucial that they use a seatbelt or car seat.

A study in the August issue of the journal *Pediatrics* reports that children were 50% less likely to suffer injuries in an auto accident when their grandparents were driving compared to when their parents were behind the wheel. However, children driving with grandparents were slightly less likely to be restrained properly than when with their parents (98% vs. 98.7%).

It is important for grandparents to review laws regarding proper transport of kids of all ages during car rides. Every state and the District of Columbia have laws requiring seat restraints for children in automobiles, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Here are some tips to ensure your grandchildren stay safe on the road:

- **Invest in a car seat.** There are three basic types of car seats; follow the manufacturer's manual when installing the seats.
 - **Infant seats** are used for children weighing 22-35

pounds, depending on the model. The seats are small and portable. Infant seats should always face the rear of the car in the back seat until the child is 2 years of age.

- **Convertible seats** can be used rear- or forward-facing. These seats can support toddlers up to 40 pounds.
- **Booster seats** are used for children up to age 12 who weigh more than 40 pounds and are less than 4 feet, 9 inches tall.
- **Set a positive example when teaching grandchildren how to drive.** Some states allow teenage drivers with learner's permits to drive with other adults, including their grandparents. Act like a parent would by enforcing rules, setting guidelines, teaching teens the rules of the road, and displaying a positive and encouraging attitude.

— *Rafael Guerrero*

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