

## CHEAT SHEET >> THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU BUY

### 1 Know your options.

Become acquainted with the kinds of car seats.

*Infant car seat or bucket seat:* A car seat designed specifically for infants that is certified for rear-facing use only; an infant car seat is often used with a stay-in-car base for easy click-in, click-out installation and may also be compatible with a stroller for use as a travel system.

*Convertible car seat:* A car seat that can be used both rear- and forward-facing, making it suitable for both infant and toddler passengers within the seat's weight recommendations.

*Booster seat:* A car seat made for forward-facing use only that typically accommodates older children as passengers; a booster seat may or may not have back support, or it may have removable back support.

### 2 Determine your needs.

Ask yourself these questions to find out which type of car seat is right for your lifestyle.

1. What is the current size and weight of your baby, and for how long would you like to use the same seat? Would you like to make a single purchase to last through baby's car seat-riding years? Or would you prefer to purchase separate seats for different stages of baby's youth?
2. If your baby is an infant, do you like the idea of carrying him or her in the car seat to and from the car? Or are you happy to take baby out of the seat when you reach your destination?
3. Will you be transferring the car seat between your car and your partner's? Or will you be purchasing another seat for a second car?
4. What sort of safety features and ratings are important to you?
5. Will you have multiple children in car seats at the same time? If so, what sort of space limitations do you need to keep in mind?

### 3 Find your fit.

Mark the features you desire in a car seat in the first column, then use the remaining columns to compare the models you're considering and clarify which best meet your requirements.

FEATURE	IMPORTANT TO ME	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
<b>Forward-facing:</b> The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all infants and toddlers ride rear-facing until 2 years of age or until they've reached the maximum weight or height allowed by the car seat's manufacturer.				
<b>Rear-facing</b>				
<b>Adjustable head support</b>				
<b>Canopy</b>				
<b>Comfortable carry handle</b>				
<b>Cup holder</b>				
<b>Machine washable upholstery</b>				
<b>LATCH installation</b>				
<b>No rethread harness</b>				
<b>Padded seat</b>				
<b>Side-impact technology</b>				
<b>Stay-in-car base</b>				
<b>Extra base:</b> An extra base is a nice option for parents who will be transporting baby in multiple vehicles.				
<b>Stroller compatibility</b>				
<b>Seat belt installation:</b> Car seats that can be installed without a base may be convenient when renting a car, riding in a taxi, or traveling in vehicle other than your own.				
<b>Height and weight limits:</b> Write in your ideal height and weight range for a car seat and note the ranges of the seats you're considering.				



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for reviews of our parent panel's top car seats choices.