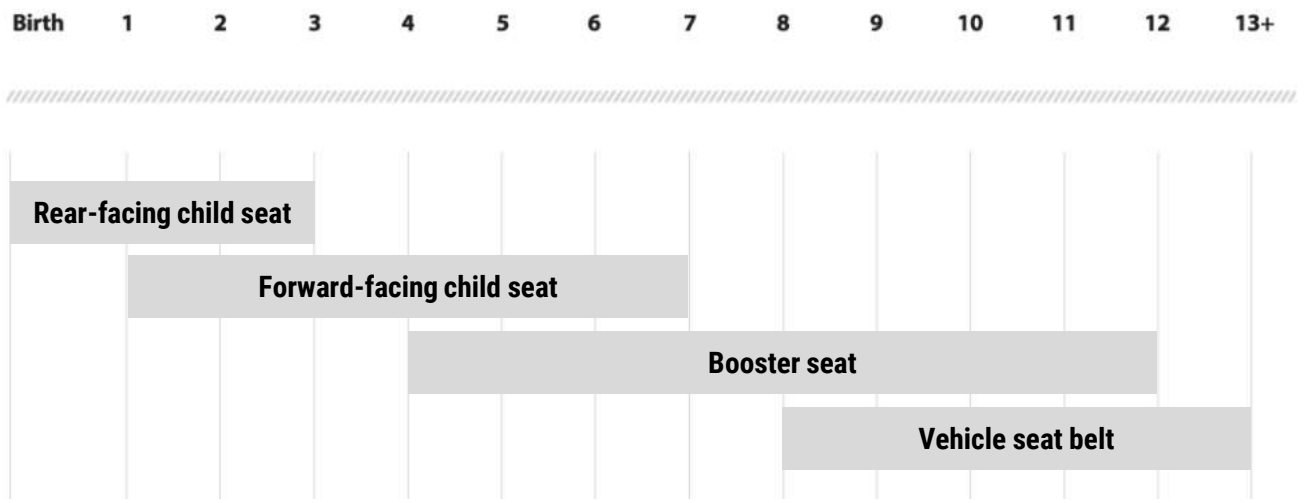
Child Passenger Safety Survey

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and injury among children in the United States. The proper use of child safety seats, as well as riding in the rear vehicle seat, are effective measures in reducing this risk.

According to recommendations from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), children should:

- Ride in the rear seat of vehicles until at least age 13
- Use the type of safety restraint that is appropriate based on their age and size
- Remain in their child seat as long as possible (within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements), before graduating to the next type of restraint.

Recommended Safety Restraints for Children by Age



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Child Passenger Safety Survey Methodology

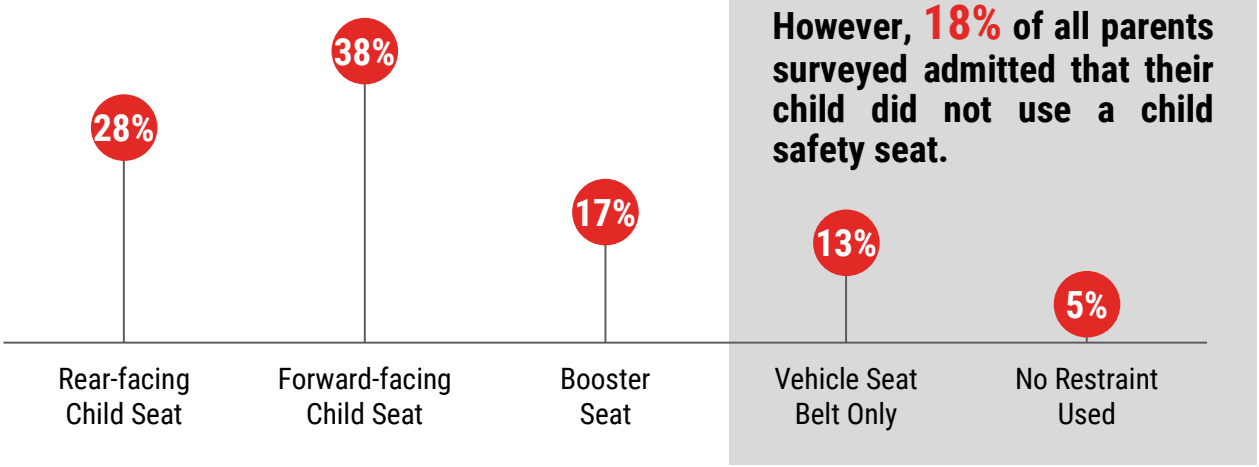
In December 2021, State Farm conducted an online survey of U.S. parents (ages 25-55) on their perspectives and behaviors related to child passenger safety.

Survey responses were received from 1,295 parents who reported having at least one child under age eight. Parents were asked to complete the survey with their youngest child in mind.

Based on the recommendations from NHTSA, all children included in this study should have been using a child safety seat when riding in a vehicle.

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Child safety seats significantly reduce the risk of injury or death to children involved in motor vehicle crashes.

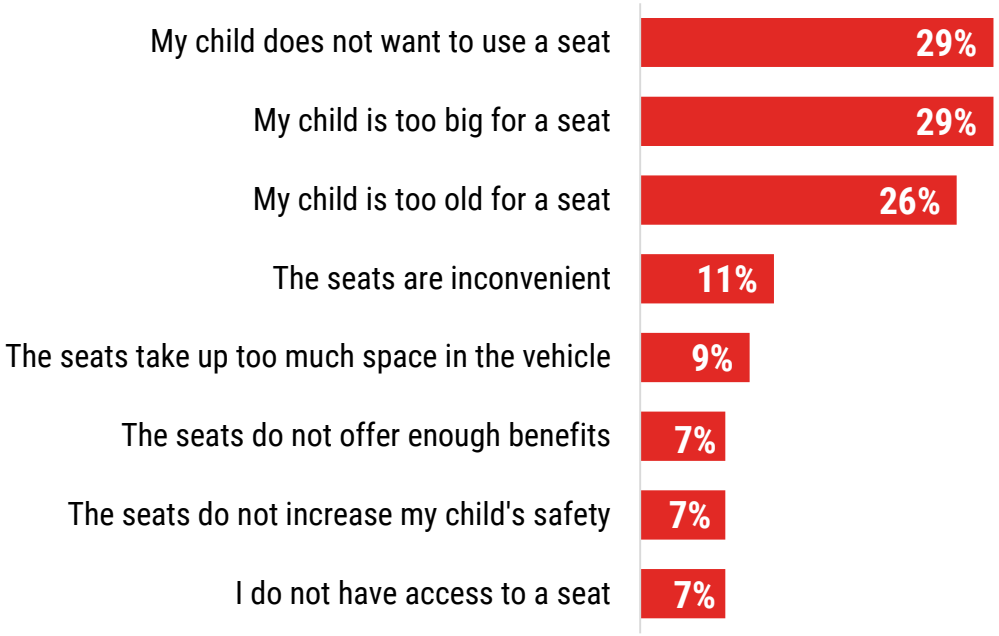


However, 18% of all parents surveyed admitted that their child did not use a child safety seat.

Base: All respondents (n = 1,295)
Note: Responses may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Among those parents who were not using child safety seats, there were a variety of reasons:

"Which of the following statements describes why your child does not use a child seat or booster seat when riding in a vehicle? Select all that apply."



Base: Respondents who indicated their child used a "vehicle seat belt only" or "no restraint used" when riding in a vehicle (n = 259)

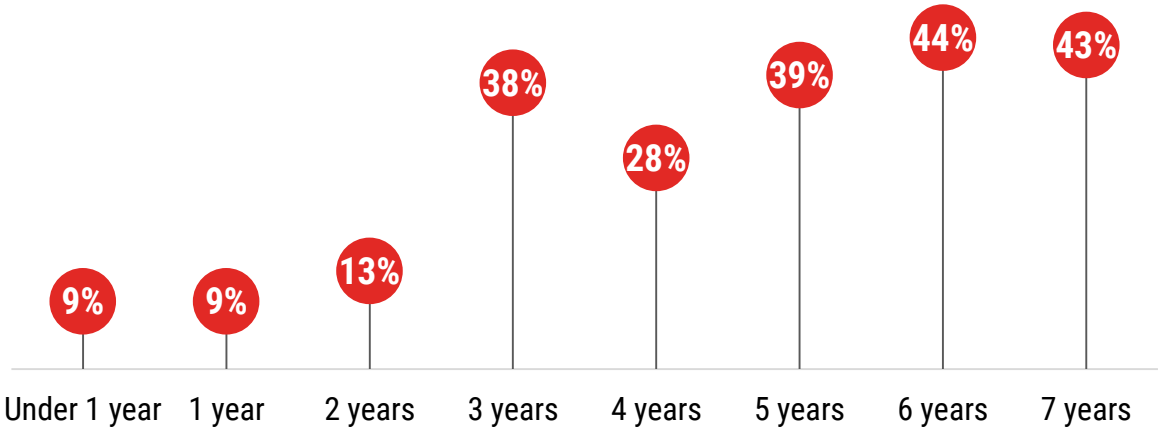
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Of all parents surveyed:

28% were not using a recommended* type of restraint for their child.

Children ages 2 and younger were **significantly more likely** to ride in a recommended type of child restraint compared to children ages 3-7.

Percent of Children (by Age) Not Using a Recommended Restraint Type



Base: All respondents (n = 1,295)
*Compared to child restraint recommendations from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Of the parents who reported using a child safety seat:

13% were not using a recommended* type of restraint for their child.

27% of children in rear-facing safety seats were not using a recommended restraint type

2% of children in forward-facing safety seats were not using a recommended restraint type

16% of children in booster seats were not using a recommended restraint type

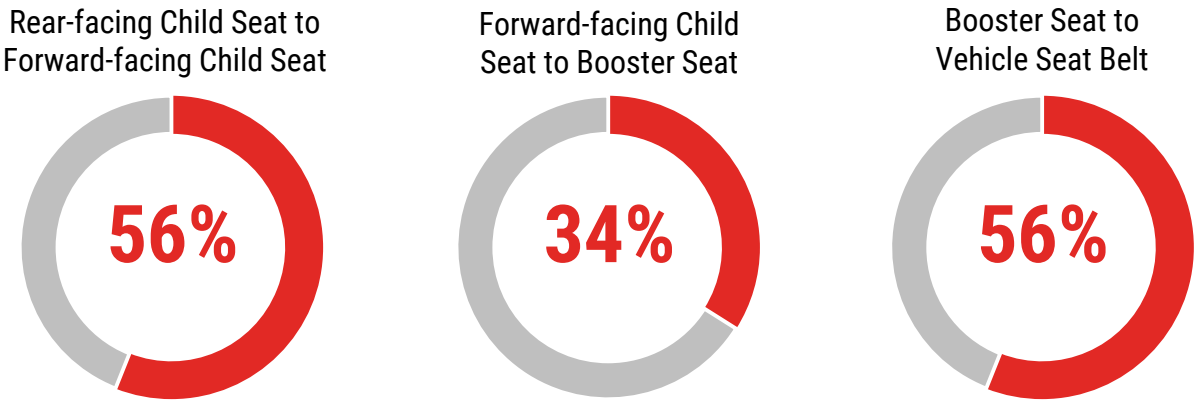
Base: Of respondents who indicated their child used a "rear-facing child seat", "forward-facing child seat", or "booster seat" when riding in a vehicle (n = 1,067)
*Compared to child restraint recommendations from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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Of all parents surveyed:

Many did not know when to graduate their child from one type of safety restraint to the next.

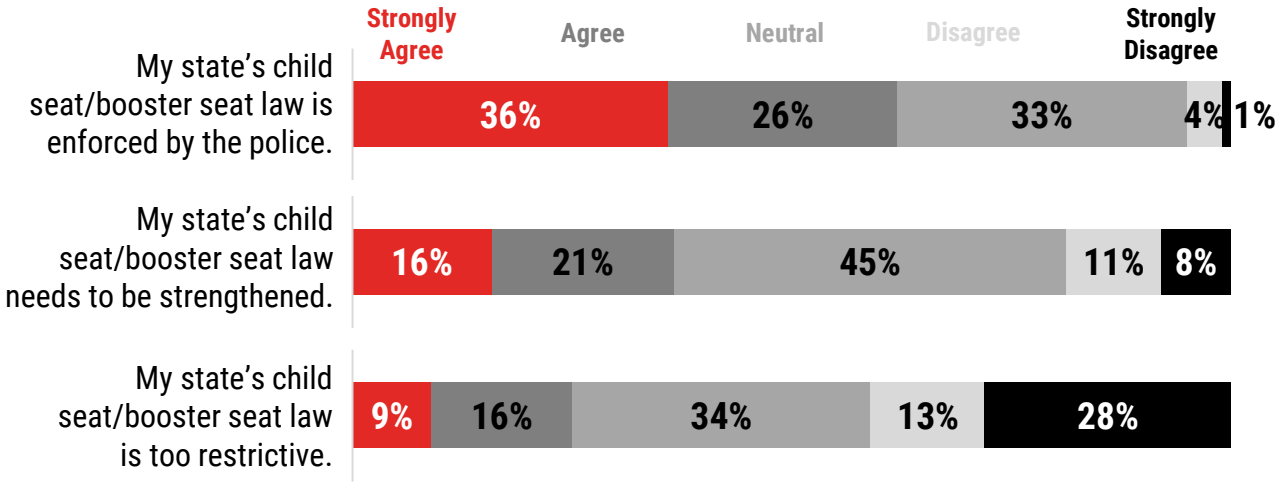
Percent of Parents Who Misidentified the Recommended* Age for Child Restraint Graduation



Base: All respondents (n = 1,295)
*Compared to child restraint recommendations from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

77% did not know what age range was covered by their state's child passenger restraint law. Some parents also expressed mixed feelings about their state law and the enforcement of it:

"To what extent, if any, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"



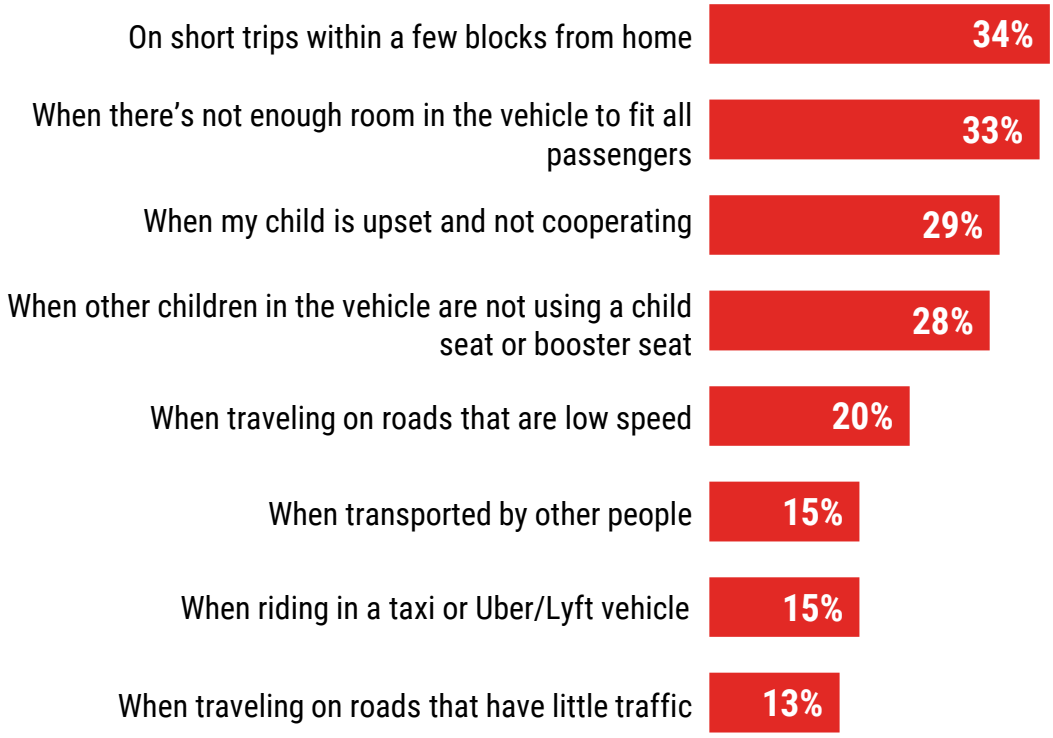
Base: All respondents (n=1,255)

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Of the parents who reported using a child safety seat:

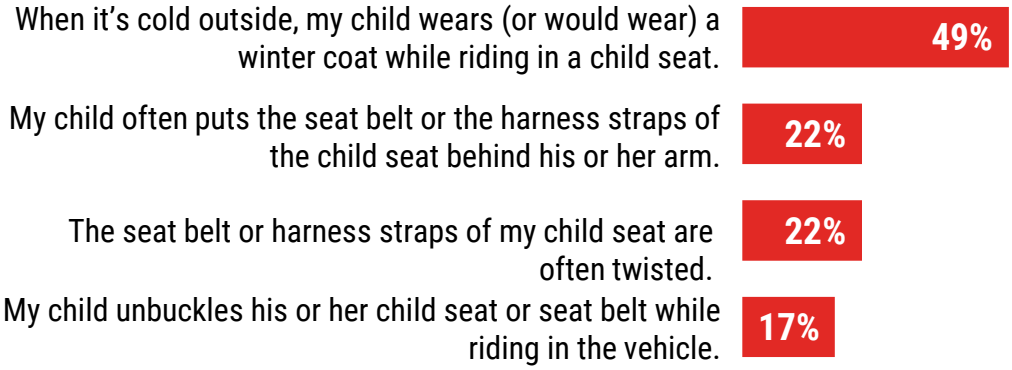
24% were not using the seats every time their child rode in a vehicle. This inconsistency tended to occur in certain circumstances:

"Under what conditions does your child not use a child seat or booster seat when riding in a vehicle? Select all that apply."



Base: Of respondents who indicated their child used a "rear-facing child seat", "forward-facing child seat", or "booster seat" when riding in a vehicle, but did not use the seat every time (n = 228)

58% admitted to at least one type of seat misuse, such as:



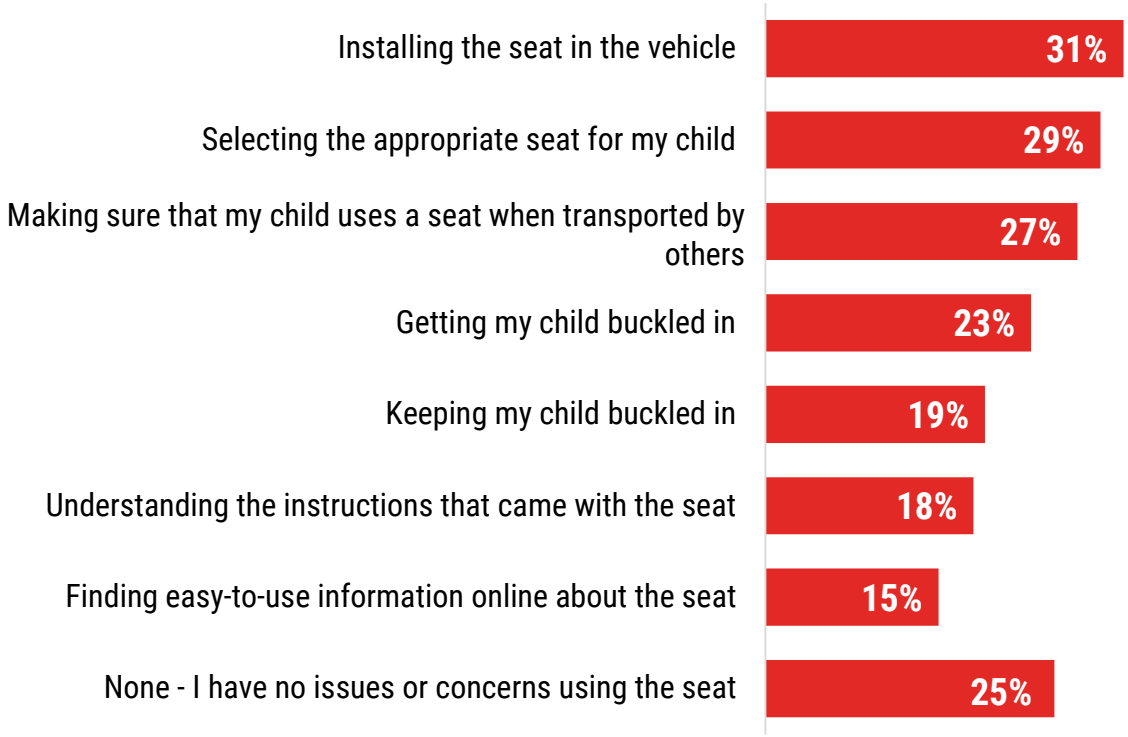
Base: Of respondents who indicated their child used a "rear-facing child seat", "forward-facing child seat", or "booster seat" when riding in a vehicle (n = 1,033)

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Of the parents who reported using a child safety seat:

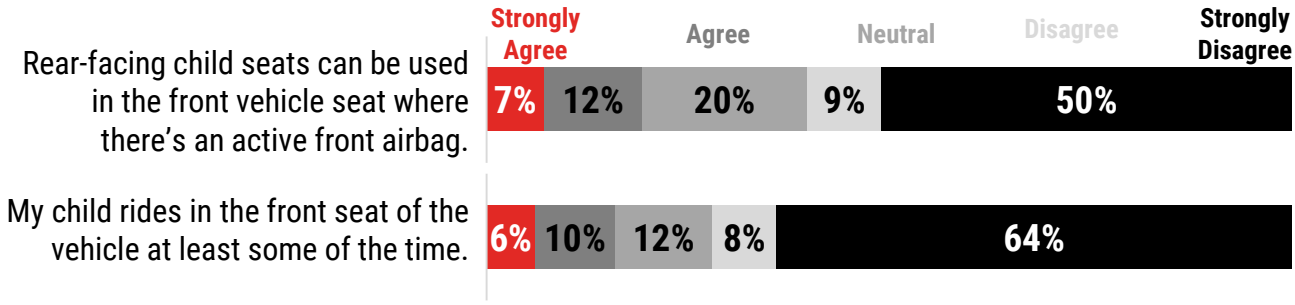
Many were confused or frustrated with selecting and using their child safety seats.

"In your opinion, what are the most worrisome, confusing or frustrating aspects of using the child seat or booster seat? Select all that apply."



Some may have not understood the risks to children when riding in the front seat of a vehicle.

"To what extent, if any, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"



Base (top and bottom): Of respondents who indicated their child used a "rear-facing child seat", "forward-facing child seat", or "booster seat" when riding in a vehicle (n = 1,033)

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