



LATCH and Tethers: What You Need to Know



5 Quick Facts

- 1) Use only the LATCH or the seatbelt to restrain your child seat. Never use both.
- 2) Using a tether reduces the risk of head and/or neck injuries.
- 3) If your vehicle does not have a tether anchor, you can ask a dealership install one.
- 4) Only use the LATCH anchors in the appropriate seating positions—many cars do not have LATCH in the middle seat, you need to use the seatbelt instead.
- 5) LATCH anchors have a 48 pound limit. If you have a higher weight harness seat, you need to use the seatbelt after your child reaches 48 pounds.

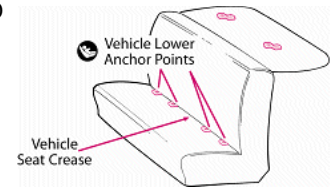
Macomb County Health Department offers FREE car seat inspections.

Call for an appointment (586) 412-3398 or visit us on the web at:

<http://www.macombcountymi.gov/publichealth/hpdc/childpassengersafety.htm>

Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH)

Any vehicle made after 2002 is required to have LATCH anchors in at least two rear seating positions. LATCH anchors are designed to be used with LATCH hooks that come with all new car seats.



In some vehicles (mainly European or Canadian made) LATCH is also known as ISO-FIX.

To find the LATCH anchors in your vehicle, check your owners manual and look in the seat crease of the rear seat for two black or silver "bars." Some vehicles have markings on the rear seat to help you find the anchors. LATCH anchors can be used for either rear-facing or forward-facing car seats.



In addition, vehicles also have one or more "upper anchors" or Tether anchors.

Any vehicle made after 2000 is required to have two or more tether anchors. The location of tether anchors is also listed in the vehicle manual and some vehicles have them marked as well with a tether symbol.

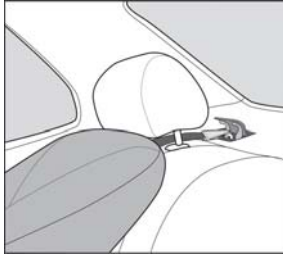
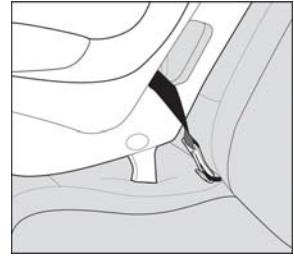


Is the LATCH anchor or seatbelt safer to use?

LATCH anchors were designed to make it easier to install car seats. LATCH anchors are not safer than seatbelts when installing car seats. And, seatbelts are not safer than LATCH. You should never use both to install your child's car seat. Use the system that makes it easiest to secure your child's car seat correctly in the vehicle.

Installing a car seat with LATCH

Always follow car seat manufacturer and vehicle instructions. First, using the vehicle manual, find the lower anchors in the seat. LATCH attachment straps either “hook down” or snap on to the anchor. Check for firm attachment to the LATCH anchor.



Using the vehicle manual, locate the tether anchors. Choose the tether anchor directly behind the car seat unless specified by vehicle manual. Attach the tether strap to the tether anchor. Check for firm attachment to the tether anchor.

Tighten the LATCH attachment straps *first*. Pull on strap to tighten LATCH. Tighten the tether strap second. Pull on strap to tighten tether. To ensure proper fit to your vehicle, grab the car seat near the LATCH strap routing and pull the seat side-to-side and back-and-forth with one hand. If the seat moves less than one inch, it is correctly installed.

Installing a car seat with the seatbelt

Always follow the car seat manufacturer and vehicle instructions. First, read the vehicle manual and determine how your seatbelt locks. Some seatbelts lock in the retractor, and some lock in the latch plate. For some seatbelts, you may need to use a locking clip (found with your car seat). Place your car seat in the vehicle and route the seatbelt through the appropriate belt path. Buckle the seatbelt and tighten the lap portion of the seatbelt by pulling the slack from the shoulder belt. To get a snug fit—car seat moves less than one inch side to side and back-and-forth—press down on the car seat with your hand or knee while tightening the seatbelt. If your seatbelt locks in the retractor, slowly pull the seatbelt out all the way and let it the retractor take the slack back up. Pull up on the shoulder belt to tighten down the lap belt. If you are using a forward-facing car seat, and your vehicle has a top tether, attach the tether and tighten.



Macomb County Health Department offers FREE car seat inspections.

Almost 85% of all seats inspected are either used incorrectly or installed incorrectly.

Is your car seat one of them?

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