Choosing a car seat

A practical UK guide for parents and carers. Start with your child, then check the exact seat and the car.



Illustrations show planning and shopping, not installation or harness instructions.

1. Know your child

Record their current height, weight and date of birth. For a baby who cannot stand, use recent reliable measurements; do not try the standing-height illustration. Age alone is not enough to choose a seat.

2. Read the exact seat label

Check the approval label and manual for that exact model. Write down its permitted child size range and the limits for each mode. A retailer title, group name or approximate age is only a starting point.

> The simplest checklist: **right for your child + right for your vehicle + correctly fitted.** [2]

START WITH THE CHILD

Measurements before milestones

3. Check every vehicle

Check the exact seat, any required base, your vehicle model and year, and the intended seating position. Ask a trained fitter to demonstrate the fit in each car before you buy. [4]

4. Confirm what you are buying

Check whether the offer is a seat, a base only, a seat-and-base package, or a pushchair bundle. Confirm the included parts and that you can obtain the correct instructions. [2]

Height-based seats: read the actual range

For R129 height-based seats, check your child against the approved height range on the seat and in its instructions. Also follow any stated maximum child weight and minimum-age conditions. Do not infer the range from a group number or an i-Size product name. [1]

Rear-facing: do not rush a change

UK rules require height-based seats to remain rear-facing until the child is over 15 months old. This is a legal minimum, not an instruction to turn the seat then. Keep rear-facing within the exact seat's approved rear-facing limits and follow its instructions. [1] [5]

The UK legal baseline

Children normally need a suitable child car seat until their 12th birthday or until they reach 135 cm tall, whichever happens first. Exceptions exist; check GOV.UK for the rules for your journey. [1]

Important front-seat check: never use a rear-facing child seat in front of an active passenger airbag. Check the vehicle manual and get fitting help if you are unsure. [1]

Write down the child's measurements

Height (cm)	Weight (kg)	Date of birth
_____	_____	_____

MAKE SENSE OF THE LABELS

What the group numbers mean

These are the older **R44 weight-group labels** still seen in product titles. They are not a height chart, a fixed age guide, or proof that a particular product is correctly described. For R129 seats, use the seat's approved height range and any weight limits instead. [1] [3]

R44 label	Child weight range
0	0-10 kg
0+	0-13 kg
1	9-18 kg
2	15-25 kg
3	22-36 kg

Why ranges overlap

A child's weight can fall within more than one group. That does not mean every seat in either group is appropriate. The exact product approval, child fit and fitting instructions still decide. [1]

Combined groups: check each mode

Labels such as 0+/1, 1/2/3 and 0+/1/2/3 describe multi-group products. They do not mean every mode, harness or facing direction is approved across the entire advertised range. Read the separate limits and changeover instructions for that exact seat. [3]

ISOFIX, bases and rotation

These describe product features or fitting arrangements, not your child's size group. Check whether a base is included, which exact base is required, and whether the combination is approved for the intended position in your car. A rotating model name does not replace these checks. [4]

Buying from a product feed? BabyFayre listings reproduce retailer descriptions. Group numbers, approximate ages and bundle names can be inaccurate or incomplete. Verify the manufacturer label and included parts before buying.

TAKE THIS TO THE RETAILER

Your before-you-buy checklist

[ ] Child fit. The child is within every applicable height, weight and age limit for the chosen mode.

[ ] Vehicle fit. The exact car, seating position, seat and base combination have been checked against the manufacturers' instructions or fit information.

[ ] Fitting help. A trained fitter has shown you the correct installation and how to secure your child using that model's instructions.

[ ] Mode changes. You know the approved rear-facing limit and when the harness, headrest or mode needs changing.

[ ] History and condition. Prefer a new seat from a reputable retailer. RoSPA advises against buying second-hand seats with an unknown history.

[ ] Instructions and parts. You have the complete manual, correct base if needed, and all required parts. Keep the manual for future checks.

My seat and vehicle notes

Exact seat model	_____
Approved size range / mode	_____
Exact base model, if needed	_____
Vehicle make, model and year	_____
Vehicle seating position	_____
Fitter / retailer and questions	_____

Keep these sources handy

1. GOV.UK: child car seats - the law
2. RoSPA: choosing child car seats
3. RoSPA: seat types and group labels
4. RoSPA: fitting and vehicle compatibility
5. RoSPA: rearward-facing baby seats

Guidance checked 2 November 2026. Recheck official advice and the exact product manual before use. This is a choosing guide, not a seat-specific installation manual. No product is certified or individually recommended here. Illustrations are AI-generated.