

Get the facts about LATCH

Securing Child Safety Seats

What is LATCH?

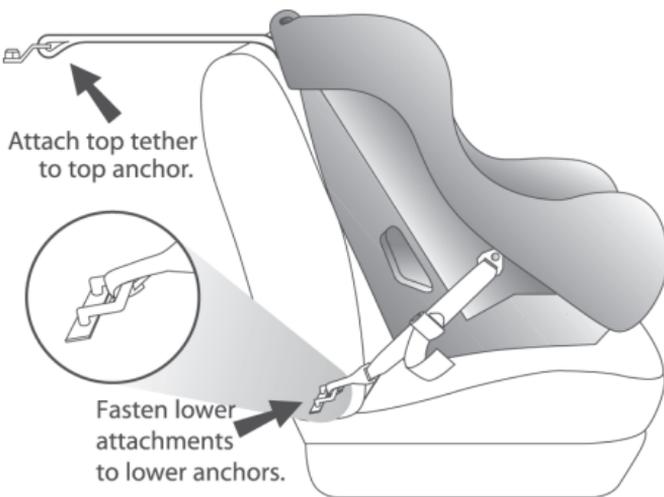
Using Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH) systems is a way to secure a child safety seat – rear-facing or forward-facing – to a vehicle without the vehicle’s seat belts. Most child safety seats and vehicles manufactured after Sept. 1, 2002 are required to have LATCH systems.

LATCH parts are in your vehicle and on your child safety seat. Both your vehicle AND child safety seat must have LATCH parts in order to use it properly.

LATCH parts in your vehicle:

- **Lower Anchors.** Vehicles with LATCH have at least two LATCH-equipped rear seating positions. Each one has two small bars called “anchors”. They are in the space between the rear seat back and the seat cushion. Lower anchors can be used for installing forward and rear-facing child safety seats.
- **Top Tether Anchors.** These metal loops are often found on the rear shelf area near the rear window. In some vehicles, such as minivans and SUVs, the anchor points may be on the floor, under the seat or even on the ceiling.

Check your vehicle owner’s manual to find out if your vehicle has lower and top tether anchors and their locations.



LATCH parts on your child safety seat:

- **Lower Anchor Straps.** This strap has two hooks or buckles, one on each side of the seat. The strap is attached to the bottom of the child safety seat.
- **Top Tether.** The top tether strap comes from the top of the child safety seat and has one hook or buckle at the end.

Check the manufacturer’s instructions for your child safety seat to find out if your seat has LATCH parts and their locations.

Do not use LATCH and the seat belt together to install a child safety seat. Only one or the other is needed. Always read and follow the vehicle owner's manual and child safety seat manufacturer's instructions when installing a child safety seat using the safety belts or LATCH.

Tips for Using LATCH

- You can use LATCH or seat belts to install child safety seats. The center of the back seat is the best location. However, most vehicles do not have LATCH in this location. Check your vehicle owner's manual.
- Be sure the lower anchor straps are properly attached to the appropriate anchor bars. The seat should be installed tightly. You should not be able to move it more than an inch from side to side or forward when holding the seat at the belt path.
- Be sure that the tether strap is connected to the correct tether anchor location in your vehicle. The tether should tightly secure the child safety seat to the back of the car's seat back.
- Child safety seats without LATCH must be installed using seat belts.
- Use top tethers when installing a forward-facing child safety seat with LATCH or seat belts.
- Most rear-facing convertible seats use only the lower anchors, not the top tether, when installed using LATCH. Check the manufacturer's instructions for your child safety seat to learn if the tether is used. Check the vehicle owner's manual for the tether anchor location.

Need Help?

If you have questions about installing a child safety seat, contact a certified child passenger safety (CPS) technician. Listings of CPS technicians, seat check events and fitting stations are available at www.safeny.com

Funded by
the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
with a grant from
the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee



State of New York
Department of Health