

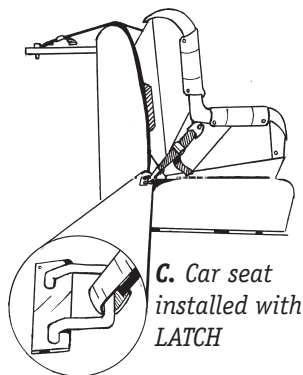
# A Tether is Better!

## Tethering your child's car seat

### What is a tether?

A tether (top strap) anchors the top of a car seat (child safety seat) to the vehicle (A). Most forward-facing car seats sold in Canada and the U.S. come with tethers. Tethers are also used with safety vests and seats for children over 40 pounds who need extra support. Tether anchors are installed in or can be added to most vehicles.

A tether is also part of a new system called "Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children" (LATCH). LATCH connects a car seat to the vehicle without using a seat belt (C). All new vehicles and car seats have LATCH as of September 2002. (See the owner's manual.)



C. Car seat installed with LATCH

### A tether adds extra protection.

Car seats that are tightly installed can do a good job even without tethers. But, in a severe crash, a tether limits the child's motion (A, B). This lessens the chance of serious head and neck injuries. A booster seat does not need a tether, since the lap-shoulder belt restrains the child.

### When should I tether my child's car seat?

- Whenever the car seat has a tether and the vehicle has an anchor.
- In vehicles where there is very little space in the back seat.
- If the seat belt does not hold your child's seat firmly in place.

### A tether has two parts

1. **On the car seat: a strap with a hook.** For older seats, order a kit from the manufacturer.
2. **In the vehicle: an anchor.** In newer vehicles, it is installed (marked with symbol, left). For an older vehicle, order an anchor kit from a car dealer (see back). **Use the kits made for your car seat and your vehicle.**

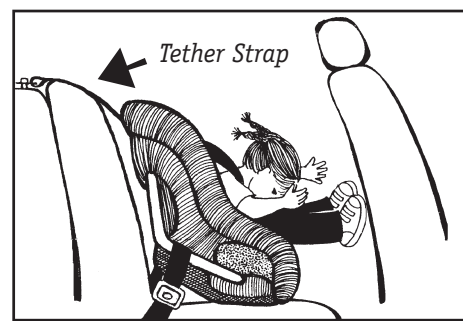


### Does my vehicle have tether anchors?

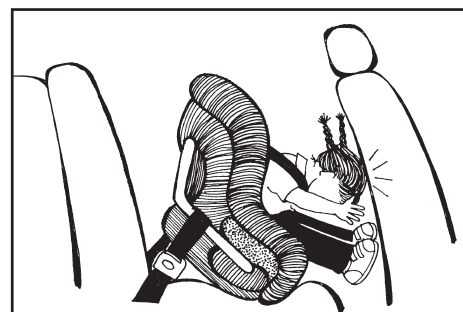
Most 2000 model year passenger cars have at least two tether anchors. All 2001 and later vans, SUVs and pickups also have anchors.

Most anchors are bars, brackets, or rings. Some are webbing straps. Some cargo tie-down hooks are also for tethers. **Many** are under covers marked with the tether symbol. Read about tethers in the owner's manual. (Look under Child Restraints in the manual.)

Some earlier vehicles also have anchors installed. Anchor kits are available for most others (see back). Some dealers will put them in at no charge. They are easy to install in many vehicles.



A. Car seat with tether in a severe crash. Seat belt, tether, and harness work together to keep the child's head out of danger.



B. Car seat without tether in a severe crash. In a high-speed crash or a vehicle with a small passenger compartment, the child's head could hit something and be injured.

### Getting a tether strap for a child's car seat

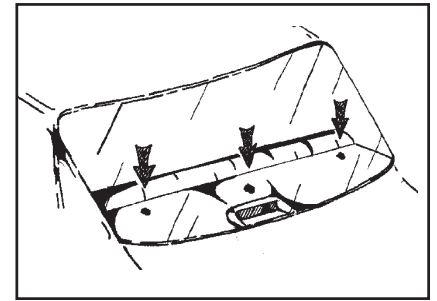
If your child's car seat did not come with a tether, call the car seat manufacturer for a kit. Some older car seats cannot be tethered. If a tether strap kit is not made for your child's seat, do not try to make your own tether.

Make  
Every Ride  
A Safe Ride



## Finding tether anchors or anchor points for forward-facing car seats:

- **Sedan:** in the shelf (filler panel) behind the back seat (D).
- **Station wagon or hatchback:** in the cargo area (E), on the back of the seat, or above the rear door.
- **Van:** anchors may be on the back or bottom of the seat or in the cargo area. The tether may be hooked to a third-row seat belt.
- **Pickup truck:** in the back wall of the cab.



D. Anchor locations behind the rear seat of a sedan

## Installing a tether anchor kit in an older vehicle

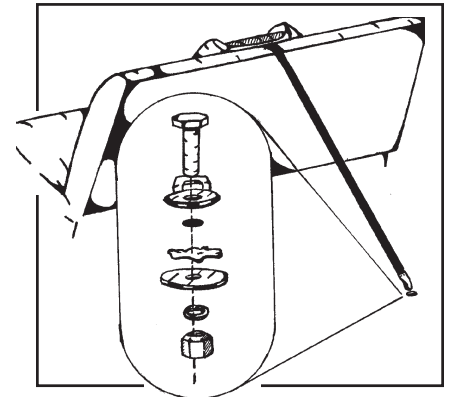
Check your owner's manual first. It may tell you where to install the kit (anchor point). Most vehicles have at least two anchor points.

The manual may have details about installing the anchor kit. Order the kit from the dealership. If the dealer's parts department does not know about tethers, they usually can find information in service manuals and dealers' parts catalogs. For more help, contact a certified child passenger safety technician at a child seat inspection site (Resources).

**Some tether anchors are easy to install**, especially if the hole is drilled and has a welded nut. Others may require the use of special tools. Most Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, and Volkswagen/Audi dealers offer the service at no charge.

Many cars, vans, SUVs, and trucks made from 1989 to 2000-01 have holes drilled for anchors. Many 1986-88 cars have anchor points that are not drilled. A few vehicles made before 1986 have anchor points.

If a tether anchor kit is not available for an older vehicle, you may be able to install a generic anchor kit from the car seat manufacturer.



E. Installing a tether anchor kit in a station wagon cargo area

## Installing an anchor yourself:

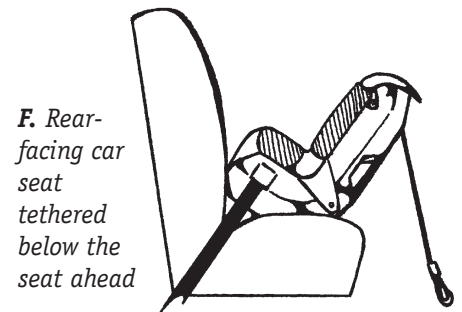
- Follow instructions in your car manual or in the anchor kit. These should tell exactly where and how to install the anchor.
- In some cases, you must drill the hole and screw a nut onto the tether bolt from underneath (E). In others, the nut is welded under the hole, so the bolt is easy to install.
- **WARNING:** Never force a bolt into a welded nut. If the bolt is the wrong size, it will ruin the nut. **ONLY** use the correct kit.

## Who can help me install a tether anchor?

If you need help, call your vehicle dealership, body shop, or local mechanic. Not all service people know about installing tethers. Refer them to vehicle service manuals or to *Tethering Child Restraints* (right).

## Can I use a tether for a rear-facing car seat?

Use a tether for a car seat facing the rear **only** if the instructions tell you it is okay. One company (Britax) sells a few car seat models with tethers for rear-facing use. Usually a rear-facing tether is anchored to the strong metal frame of the vehicle seat ahead (F) rather than to a regular tether anchor. Follow the car seat instructions.



F. Rear-facing car seat tethered below the seat ahead

## Resources:

### Child Seat Questions

National Auto Safety Hotline, 888-DASH-2-DOT, 800-424-9153 (tty) or [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. Helpline, 800-745-SAFE (7233) or [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org)

**To find a Child Seat Inspection Station** with a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician:

Go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) and click on "child seat inspections"

*Tethering Child Restraints*, Safe Ride News Publications; installation manual with vehicle part numbers. Order from Safe Ride News Publications 206-364-5696 or [www.saferidenews.com](http://www.saferidenews.com)