

## Looking Back on Rear-Facing Car Seats: Surveying US Parents in 2011 and 2013

### Purpose

The purpose of the study was to evaluate changes over time in the age at which US parents turn their child’s car seat from rear to forward facing in relation to updated guidelines released by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and to identify the sources of information parents use to make that decision.

### Background

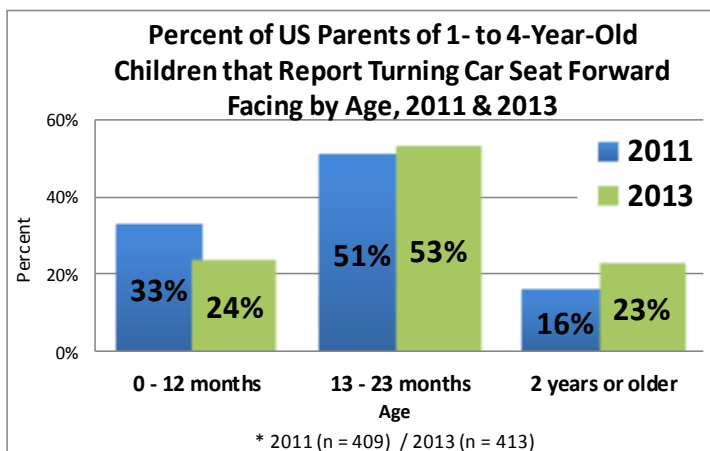
In March 2011, the AAP revised its guidelines, recommending parents keep their child rear facing until at least 2 years of age or until the child outgrows the height or weight limit of their rear-facing seat. Researchers had yet to examine the age at which parents decide to turn a child forward facing.

### Methods

Two separate cross-sectional web-based surveys were administered with a national sample of US parents/guardians of children < 4 years old in May 2011 and November 2013. The survey response rate was 54% both years.

### Key Findings

- Car seat packaging and clinicians (doctors/nurses) were the most common sources of car seat information reported by parents in 2011 and 2013.
- Turning a child’s car seat forward facing between 13 to 15 months of age was the most common age parents reported in both years.



### Implications

Findings indicate more parents reported delaying the transition to a forward-facing car seat after their child was more than 12 months of age in 2013 than in 2011. This change over time may be partially attributed to the increased awareness and acceptance of the updated AAP guidelines.

The low percentage of parents waiting until their child is at least 2 years old before transitioning to forward facing in 2013 still presents an opportunity to improve child passenger safety in the U.S.

As common sources of trusted information identified by this study, clinicians may be influential in parents’ child passenger safety decisions and should consider the opportunity to educate parents about current AAP guidelines and encourage compliance.

### Citation

Macy M, Butchart A, Singer D, Gebremariam A, Clark S, Davis M. Looking back on rear-facing car seats: Surveying US parents in 2011 and 2013. *Academic Pediatrics*. 2015;15(5):526-533. doi:10.1016/j.acap.2014.10.004.