

Using LATCH in the Center: Overview

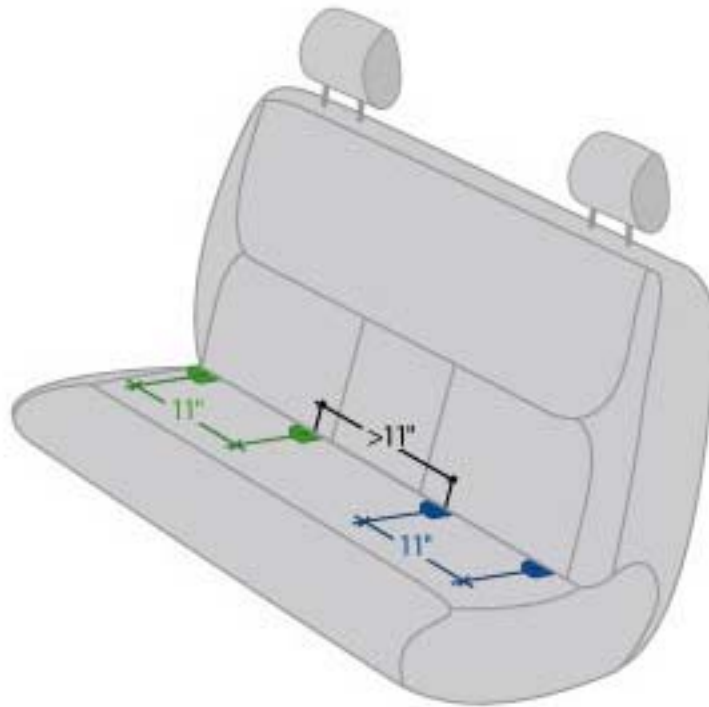
Can I use the lower anchors to install a car seat in the center position?

Why is this even a question? Remember that vehicles must have tether anchors in THREE backseat positions and lower anchors in TWO backseat positions. That usually leaves the center seat as the odd-man out--meaning it has a tether anchor but no lower anchors. A clever person might ask "Can't I just use the two inner lower anchors from the side seats to secure a child safety seat in the center?" This is one of the most common questions we get asked.

While it is usually physically possible, it is usually NOT recommended by the vehicle manufacturer and may be unsafe. Your vehicle owner's manual will indicate whether or not it is permissible to use lower anchors to secure a child safety seat in the center of your vehicle. Do not install a child safety seat in the center using lower anchors unless your vehicle owner's manual clearly states that it is permissible.

Why is it unsafe?

The distance between the inner-most lower anchors is usually not the standard 11.02 inches found between the lower anchors on the side seats. Many child safety seat manufacturers do NOT want their seats secured to lower anchors that are wider or narrower than the standard 11.02 inches. Many vehicle manufacturers also do not want a child safety seat secured to lower anchors that are wider or narrower than the 11.02 standard spacing. **A wider spacing may allow the child safety seat to move too much side-to-side in a crash.**



There are certain situations when a child safety seat CAN be safely secured in the center using the lower anchors.

4 lower anchors with center ones more than 11 inches apart

- The vehicle has a designated LATCH position in the center of the back seat. This means it has lower anchors that are 11 inches apart and specifically intended for use in the center seat.
- The child safety seat manufacturer and the vehicle manufacturer **BOTH** allow you to use lower anchors that are spaced wider or narrower than 11 inches. Please check **BOTH** your vehicle and child safety seat owners manuals to see if yours allow this.

Using LATCH in the Center: Car Seats

Which child safety seat manufacturers allow you to use lower anchors that are spaced wider or narrower than 11 inches apart?

- **Britax:** Spacing can be from 11 to 20 inches, as long as the vehicle manufacturer also permits this.
- **Chicco:** Spacing must be 11 inches. *This effectively means that you cannot use a Chicco car seat in the center unless it has dedicated center lower anchors.*
- **Cosco/Dorel (includes Maxi Cosi):** any spacing, as long as vehicle manufacturer clearly permits.
- **Fisher Price:** Spacing can be from 11 to 20 inches, as long as vehicle manufacturer clearly permits.
- **Graco:** Spacing must be 11 inches or more, as long as vehicle manufacturer clearly permits. *Retroactive to all seats as of May 16, 2011.*
- **Orbit Baby:** Spacing from 11 to 20 inches, as long as vehicle manufacturer permits.
- **Recaro:** Any spacing, as long as vehicle manufacturer permits.
- **Safeguard:** Spacing from 11 to 20 inches, as long as vehicle manufacturer permits.
- **Snuggly:** Spacing from 11 to 20 inches, as long as vehicle manufacturer permits
- **Triple Play (Sit 'N' Stroll):** Spacing can be over 11 inches, as long as vehicle manufacturer permits.

As you can see, the vehicle manufacturer **MUST** specifically allow you to use a narrower or wider spacing even if the child safety seat manufacturer allows the unusual spacing.

Using LATCH in the Center: Vehicles

Which vehicles allow you to use lower anchors that are narrower or wider than 11 inches?

Unfortunately, most vehicles **DO NOT** allow you to use lower anchors that are spaced wider or narrower than 11 inches. **If your vehicle is made by one of the manufacturer's listed below, you CANNOT install your child safety seat using the lower anchors in the center of the backseat--NO EXCEPTIONS!** Use the seat belt to install the child safety seat in the center instead. If your vehicle is made by a manufacturer not listed below, read your vehicle owner's manual to see if it's permitted to install a car seat in the center using the lower anchors.

- Acura (except 2007 and newer RDX and MDX)
- BMW
- Daewoo
- Honda (except new models of CRV, Pilot, Ridgeline & Odyssey--see Using LATCH in the Center spreadsheet for full details)
- Infiniti
- Isuzu
- Jaguar
- Kia
- Land Rover
- Lexus (except 2001-2007 LX470)
- Mercedes-Benz
- Mini
- Nissan (except 2004 and newer Quest--See Using LATCH in the center spreadsheet for fu)
- Porsche
- Saab (except 2010 and newer 9-5)
- Scion
- Subaru
- Toyota (except Sequoia, Sienna, Tundra and LandCruiser--See Using LATCH in the center spreadsheet for full details)
- Volkswagen (except Routan)
- Volvo