

Car Seat and Stroller Guide

Look for these key features, then take your top car seat and strollers for a test drive in stores near you.

An **easy-to-carry handle** makes getting around easier

A **retractable canopy** shields your baby from the sun

Ensure a safe, secure fit with a **5-point harness and padded headrest**

Look for a **washable cover** for spills, stains and drool

Side-impact protection absorbs crash forces and helps to shield your baby

A **sturdy base** stabilizes the car seat and makes installation a breeze

To ensure your baby is properly reclined, look for a **level indicator**

Car seat compatibility allows you to go from car seat to stroller and vice versa with minimal fuss

Customize the stroller height with an **adjustable handlebar** for ultimate comfort

Reclining positions are perfect for naps

All-wheel suspension system ensures a smooth ride on any ground surface

Make sure the **canopy** is large enough to shade your baby from the sun

A **reversible seat** means your baby can look at you or scenery

Easy-to-clean fabrics help with mess

Folds simply and compactly for easy storage and transport

A **storage basket** roomy enough for bags and baby essentials is ideal



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Different types of strollers

Full-sized stroller

Lightweight / umbrella stroller

Jogging stroller

Double stroller

Car seat carrier

Travel system

Quick Tips

Strollers cost anywhere from \$30 to \$1,200. **Knowing your budget and needs** will help you narrow down your options.

A basic **lightweight umbrella stroller** makes travel and storage easy, while a **high-function stroller system** boast helpful features like extra storage and snap-on bassinets or car seats.

Trying out your top choices before purchasing one will go a long way in making sure it works for baby's needs — and for the needs of anyone else who will be pushing it, folding it and stowing their things within it along the way.

What to consider when buying a stroller?

Where will you use it?

Big and bulky mid-range models are not ideal if you're navigating narrow city streets. On the other hand, a small umbrella stroller might not work for you if you need a stroller basket big enough to handle your purse, diaper bag and other essentials. Know where you'll go with your stroller — that's half the battle.

How easy is it to use?

Once you've done some research and narrowed down your choices, test drive it in person so you can see how your favorites compare. Don't forget that a flat and shiny store floor may not reveal how a particular model will do on uneven sidewalks or hills. Can you steer it smoothly? Can you maneuver it with one hand? How does it handle a sharp turn?

How easy is it to fold and unfold?

You'll likely be holding your baby and their stuff when you need to fold or unfold the stroller, so easier is better. Many models tout a one-hand fold, but test it out before you buy. Not all one-handed folds are as easy as they sound.

How heavy is it?

When you're on the road, lighter is better. Be careful because some manufacturers will call a 25-pound stroller lightweight, while others can weigh a mere 12 pounds. That's a big difference when you're carrying your baby, diaper bag and stroller up and down endless staircases or squishing on to the subway.

Is it newborn friendly?

Read the fine print. Some strollers offer a deep recline or bassinet mode, which means you can put your newborn in them from day one with no add-ons needed, which is very convenient. But many models are more suitable for infants who have some neck control or can nearly sit up on their own, which usually doesn't happen until four to six months. With this option you will need to attach a car seat or optional bassinet to make some models infant-ready. So know what you're getting before you buy.

How long do you plan to use it?

While paying more up front for certain models, being able to adapt from newborn through toddler stages could save you cash in the long run. Do you plan to use the stroller for multiple kids? If yes, shop for long-term value and consider a model you can add onto — a car seat, a stand-and-ride bumper or an additional seat for a new baby.

Do you need more than one?

If your budget permits, you can get an umbrella stroller for the road and a full-sized model for busy days in your neighborhood. For some families, one stroller just doesn't cover all the bases, no matter how cleverly designed. If that's the case, consider splitting your stroller budget rather than investing heavily in one. You might need a basic full-size model for home and a separate umbrella stroller for travel.

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How do I make sure my stroller is safe?

Almost all stroller models these days meet basic safety standards, but there are a few safety features to consider when shopping around.

Look for a five-point safety harness.

Five-point harnesses are relatively standard these days, but some umbrella strollers may skimp with a three-point harness. Test the snaps to make sure they're secure and easy to buckle and not too easy to unbuckle for the baby.

Put on the brakes — literally.

Be sure to test how easy the brakes are to use — and how easy they are to trip, too. Do you find yourself hitting the brakes when you don't intend to? Do the brakes offer a secure stop? Can you easily disengage the brakes when you're ready to move again?

Examine the hinges and edges.

Nooks and crannies on any baby product can be tricky, but be especially careful when looking at strollers. Little fingers and toes can get caught in tight spaces, so beware of any protrusions or sharp edges.

Get some shade.

A stroller shade or canopy is a must for walks in the sun (or rain) — consider opting for a model with built-in SPF protection too.

Register your stroller as soon as you buy it.

This will keep you in the loop if there's ever a recall — information you will want to act on immediately.

Lie back and relax.

How deep does the seat recline? If you're planning to put a newborn into the stroller, look for models that offer a nearly flat recline. Or find a stroller that can easily attach an infant car seat, which helps you move a sleeping baby without drama.

Put all the pieces together.

When looking at a travel system, pay attention to the safety ratings for the car seat and check out how the car seat attaches to the stroller. Is it a one-click system or easy-to-use system? Are there a lot of straps or an adapter involved? You want it to be as simple and straightforward as possible.

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