

A Focus on Kids and Car Safety Tips



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Summer is here so this is a good time to remind parents and babysitters about a few things that can prevent a disaster from happening.

First, do not leave a child in a closed car. Cars heat up quickly even with a window rolled down two inches. Statistics show that if the outside temperature is in the low 80s, the temperature inside the car can reach deadly levels in only 10 minutes.

This is dangerous because children's bodies overheat easily, and infants and children under four years of age are among those at greatest risk for heat-related illness.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- o Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.
- o Do not let your children play in an unattended vehicle. Teach them that a vehicle is not a play area.
- o Never leave infants or children in a parked vehicle, even if the windows are partially open.
- o Make a habit of looking in the vehicle, front and back, before locking the door and walking away.
- o If you see a child alone in a hot vehicle, call the police. If they are in distress due to heat, get them out as quickly as possible. Cool the child rapidly. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

Second: we all live by our daily routine as it helps in getting things done. If you change your routine, be extra careful as this is when you, your spouse or a babysitter can forget your child is in a carseat. We all think this would never happen, but sadly it does happen, especially when you break a well-established routine.

Here are some tips to keep in mind if you do have a change in your routine:

- o When your routine changes and you are dropping your child off at childcare, and it is normally your spouse or partner who does this, make a plan that someone call you to make sure that the drop off went according to plan.
- o Ask your childcare provider to call you if your child does not show up for childcare.
- o Do things to remind yourself that a child is in the vehicle, such as:
 - o Writing yourself a note and putting the note where you will see it when you leave the vehicle.
 - o Placing your purse, briefcase or something else you need in the back seat so that you will have to check the back seat when you leave the vehicle.
 - o Keeping an object in the car seat, such as a stuffed toy. When the child is buckled in, place the object where the driver will notice it when he or she is leaving the vehicle.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. For more child safety tips visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration online: www.nhtsa.gov.