

Twittercue: Hot days can lead to child #heatstroke deaths in cars. See BE SAFE prevention tips: www.KidsAndCars.org

NEWS RELEASE

KidsAndCars.org

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KidsAndCars.org warns against leaving children in hot vehicles this summer

In 2010 a record 49 children died of heat stroke in cars

Leawood, Kan. – June 8, 2011 ... With hot summer days ahead, KidsAndCars.org is warning parents and caregivers to take extra precautions to prevent leaving children alone in cars. Through May 31 this year 8 children had already died of heat stroke in vehicles – close to the record-setting pace of 2010 when 49 infants and children died.

“It’s a record no one wants to see broken,” says Janette Fennell, founder and president of KidsAndCars.org, a national nonprofit child safety organization working to prevent injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. Since the group began tracking data and working on the issue in 1998, more than 500 children have died in these preventable tragedies.

A child’s body temperature climbs three to five times faster than an adult’s, especially in a hot car. In less than 30 minutes, the temperature inside a car can increase 35 degrees. An infant can die in as little as 15 minutes even on a mild 75-degree day.

Unfortunately, even the most conscientious parents can overlook a sleeping baby in a car. “The biggest mistake people make is to think ‘It couldn’t happen to me,’” Fennell said. “Memory experts point out that if you’ve ever forgotten a pot left burning on the stove, you’ve seen how easy it is to have a dangerous memory lapse.”

To prevent vehicular heat stroke deaths, KidsAndCars.org recommends learning the following safety tips. You could also tape them to the dashboard.

Back seat – Put something in the back seat so you have to open the door when leaving the vehicle – cell phone, employee badge, handbag, etc.

Every child should be correctly restrained in the back seat.

Stuffed animal – Move it from the car seat to the front seat to remind you when your baby is in the back seat.

Ask your babysitter or child-care provider to call you within 10 minutes if your child hasn't arrived on time.

Focus on driving – Avoid cell phone calls and texting while driving.

Every time you park your vehicle open the back door to make sure no one has been left behind.

KidsAndCars.org also urges security personnel, parking lot attendants and the public to watch for children alone in a vehicle. Call 911 or the local emergency number immediately. If the child seems hot or sick, they should get them out as quickly as possible.

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About KidsAndCars.org: Founded in 1996, KidsAndCars.org is a national nonprofit child safety organization dedicated to preventing injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. KidsAndCars.org was the first to focus on preventing heat stroke deaths of children being inadvertently left in a vehicle. The organization is also the only one working full-time to educate parents, caregivers and the general public about additional nontraffic vehicle-related dangers to children, including backover and frontover accidents. The organization works to prevent tragedies through data collection, education and public awareness, policy changes and survivor advocacy.