

Could your child escaped from locked car trunk?

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HOUSTON - Sometimes children play in places they shouldn't, like the trunk of the car. If your child got trapped inside, could he or she get out?

According to kidsandcars.org, at least 46 children in the United States have died after being locked inside car trunks in the past 19 years.

"Reality is that it gets dark very quickly," said Jim Baylor, a child safety expert with [R.A.D. Texas](http://R.A.D.Texas). "They're in a situation where they think they're OK."

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Issac Dunner, 2, and his 4-year-old brother, Dominic Wilk, of Indiana were not OK when they accidentally locked themselves in the trunk of their parents' car in June. They died.

A month after the boys' deaths, 8-year-old Preston Mayhan died in Oklahoma City after he crawled inside the trunk of the car his parent purchased two days before his death.

Both of the cars had one thing in common -- they were built before 2002, before the U.S. required car manufacturers to install emergency trunk releases.

Emergency trunk releases glow, making it easy for someone inside to find it. If the release is pulled, the trunk should open.

Savanna Mata, 12, and her 8-year-old brother, Trent, tested the releases. Savanna found the release and pulled it, but she almost panicked when the trunk did not pop up.

"It got kind of scary because I thought it was opening up," she said. "But you just have to push."

Baylor said children should be shown how the emergency release works so if they are ever in a situation when they need to use it, it won't be as scary and difficult.

"If they're educated, they know what's going on," he said.

Older cars without a manufacturer-installed emergency trunk release can be retrofitted with a release.

"Very cheap -- we're talking \$10 and up," said Don Kerstetter with Classic Chevrolet.

Kerstetter said the installation takes a few minutes, and it can be done by a dealer or by the car owner.

"It is a way for us to fix these older model cars and keep them safe on the road," he said."

Unfortunately, children may get trapped in the trunks of cars that do not belong to parents -- like a predator's car. Experts recommend parents teach their children to feel around for tools in the trunks of cars that could be used to pop out a tail light or break the lock on the trunk.

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