

# Mother Warns Dangers of Leaving Kids in Cars

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Non-profit Kids and Cars say every nine days a child dies from heat stroke inside a vehicle, a statistic Lyn Balfour knows all too well.

"I was one of those parents that said no way, this could never happen to me," said Balfour.

On March 30, 2007, Balfour's 9-month-old son Bryce died after being left in a car.

According to Kids and Cars, last year 44 children died from vehicular heat stroke after being left inside a vehicle.

"About 50 percent of those kids are actually forgotten by their parents, they are not intentionally left in the car. Usually it's a parent that normally doesn't take the kid to school, someone off the routine," said Pediatrician Alaina Brown. Balfour didn't typically take Bryce to daycare, and was driving her husband's car that day, with two baby seats in it. The one in her view was empty.

"I go to my office, I immediately got out of the car and into work, thinking he was at daycare," Balfour said.

It wasn't until nearly eight hours later, and a phone call from Bryce's babysitter, that Balfour realized what had happened.

"After a minute she was like 'Lyn, you didn't drop him off this morning.' That's when the whole morning flashed through my eyes and I can remember dropping him off, and I ran to the car and that's when I found him," Balfour said. Now, more than seven years later, she honors Bryce's memory by helping parents prevent tragedies.

"I feel my job is not done. That the promise I made to my son when he died is that I would educate as many parents as possible," Balfour said.

As part of her advocacy for Kids and Cars, Balfour hands out stuffed animals to new parents at hospitals. The animals wear a card around their neck with tips to help parents look before they lock.

Kids and Cars recommends parents put a child's toy in their car seat. Then, when they and the baby are on the go, move the toy to the passenger seat in full view, to remember the child is with them.

"It happens to everyone. It doesn't matter what color you are, it doesn't matter where you are from, it doesn't matter how you were raised, it doesn't matter how well you take care of your children, and think that it cannot happen to you, because it absolutely can," said Balfour.

This issue gets a lot of attention on hot days like today, but doctors say it can happen year round. In fact, when Balfour left Bryce in the car, the high was only around 65 degrees, which is why she says it's something parents need to think about year round.

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