

I Regret Leaving My Son in the Car By Himself

[Christine Coppa](#), Yahoo News, Parenting, February 12, 2015



My son, Jack, and our pup, Lucy (Photo by Christine Coppa)

I left my kid, 7, and my dog locked alone in our Jeep a few weeks ago — and I still feel guilty about it.

The drive-through at my bank was out-of-service. I turned around to the backseat to face my son, Jack, and said, “Dude, stay put. You’re in charge of Lucy.” I cracked my passenger side front window a little under an inch for fresh air, and locked them both in. A little less than 10 minutes later, I was back.

While stopped at a red light on the way home, I looked in the rearview mirror and saw my beautiful boy and loyal pup sharing licks of a green lollipop from the bank — and it hit me. What if somebody stole my car? What if somebody hurt my child? These are the most important, precious people (I consider Lucy a human) in my life. I’m never doing this again — even if I can see them while they wait alone.

Some [19 states have laws against](#) leaving kids alone in a car, but I know I’m not the only parent who has done so complete an errand. Out of 60 people I asked in an unofficial Facebook poll, 46 admitted they had.

One commenter left her 6-year-old and infant in a locked car while she ran into the store to grab milk. Another mom confessed a similar story — but said her husband is a cop and she never told him about this. Another mom said she left her kid in the car to pick up the family dog from the groomer and to grab takeout pizza.

Another mom, Melissa, sent me a private Facebook message explaining if her baby is sleeping in the carseat, she’ll lock her in the car and run to the pick-up elementary line to grab her older daughter. Two friends even admitted to leaving babies as young as 3 months old alone while they napped in a car seat in the backseat.



Photo of Johanna Dickson, her brother Sean and Mom — from the 80s.

Johanna Dickson is now 31, but remembers when she was 4 and would stay in a vehicle alone with her 1-year-old brother. Once, the key broke in the door lock and her mom couldn’t get back in.

"Mom did her best to remain calm throughout it and I believe my brother was asleep at the time — I just sat there waving at her, a little confused as to why she was just standing there," Dickson tells Yahoo Parenting. Next thing Dickson remembers is her dad showing up and smashing a window.

Dickson, who doesn’t have any kids yet told us she’d never leave her future kids in a locked car in NYC, where she resides now. “They would have to be 8 years old, in the suburbs, and only if I could see them from where I was.”

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