

## Look Before You Lock Kids in Hot Cars

By: Marci Manley, KARK 4 News Updated: July 20, 2012

Ten year old Canyon Williams has been collecting stuffed toys to donate to new parents at White County Medical Center's New Life Center.

"We had looked up online how many kids have died in their cars from suffocating, and we decided we wanted to help," he said.

The furry friends are delivered to families as a part of the "Look Before You Lock" program with [Kidsandcars.org](http://Kidsandcars.org). It's a nationwide campaign that tries to keep kids from getting locked in hot cars. Canyon's program is the only one in Arkansas.



The toys are placed in the front seat whenever your kiddo is in the car seat. Once you've unloaded your child, the toy switches spots. It's a visual reminder of your baby on board.

"It's not a good idea at all to leave a child in a hot car," said ER Physician Dr. Martin Carey. "They can very quickly become overheated."

According to Dr. Carey kids who are exposed to extreme heat cannot manage the mercury's rising like adults. Their body surface area is far less in proportion to their weight.

"It's a little more difficult sometimes for them to sweat off and get rid of the heat," he said. "Children usually don't drink as many fluids as adults so they can become dehydrated quicker as well." And the circumstances of a child in a hot car are especially distressing.

"If they are in their car seat, then they are restrained. They can't free themselves, and they can't draw attention to themselves. They can't gain access to fluids. It could turn into a serious situation very quickly," he said.

On an 80 degree day, much cooler than today's 108 degree temperatures, the inside of a car can become 20 degrees hotter in 10 minutes. In half an hour, that spikes to roughly 34 degrees. By the time an hour ticks by, the inside of your car could be a roasting 40-50 degrees hotter. That can prove fatal for kids.

"They can suffer heat stroke at those temperatures. Then, you're looking at a high fatality rate or the possibility of serious brain damage," said Dr. Carey. "They can quickly go from experiencing a heat-related illness to heat stroke, and it's usually a downward spiral from there."

"Do not leave them in a closed car under any kind of circumstances in this kind of weather," he added.

Another tip for parents is to put something like a purse, briefcase or even a cell phone in the back with your baby. Those are things we need when we head to work or to run errands, so you'll be more likely to double check the back.

According to the "Look Before You Lock" safety handout, parents should also make it a habit to check both the front and back seat every time you get out of the car. But perhaps the best advice for avoiding a hot temperature tragedy is coming from 10-year-old Canyon. "It could happen to you, and you should not to think it couldn't," he said.

So far, Canyon's donated around 250 animals to the White County Medical Center to give to new parents.

If you would like to get involved, check out his Facebook page: [Canyon's Look Before You Lock](https://www.facebook.com/Canyon's-Look-Before-You-Lock).

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