

Program Warns Parents About Leaving Babies in Cars

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LEE'S SUMMIT — A Lee's Summit baby who was unknowingly left the backseat of a hot car and died in May has prompted a national campaign urging drivers to "Look Before They Lock".

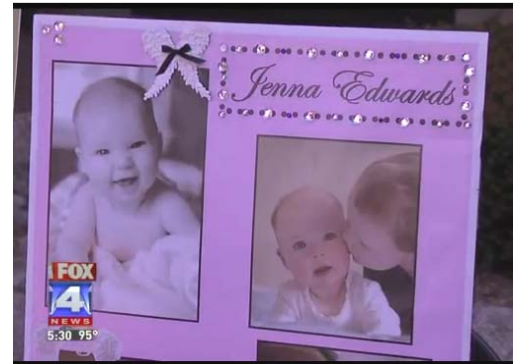
The federal government says 13-month-old Heath Hubbard is one of 23 babies who died in 2012 from being left behind in a hot car. Experts tell FOX 4 that the interior temperature of a car parked in the sun can jump 20 degrees in less than 10 minutes.

Four years ago, Jodie Edwards unknowingly left her 11-month-old baby, Jenna, in her car while she worked all day. Jenna died of heat stroke. She says news reports in Cincinnati portrayed her as a negligent mother. Now, she speaks out to correct those false perceptions. Edwards says she's no different from any other loving parent.

"It's very hard, very painful," said Jodie Edwards. "This is a very difficult thing to lose a child but it's important to me to get the right story out."

Edwards says a change in routine contributed to her not realizing she had left her daughter in her car. That's similar to what Lee's Summit Police say happened to a mom in May when her son died in a hot car. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration wants Americans to make "Look Before You Lock" part of their driving routine.

"There's nothing that's any worse that can happen to one family than to lose a child," said David Strickland with NHTSA. "But to lose a child to heat stroke. Frankly, that's a situation where you can't imagine it happening in the first place. But let me tell everybody here, it can happen to anyone."



Strickland says during the first seven days of August, eight babies died of heat stroke from being left in vehicles. The bodies of young children heat up three to five times faster than adults making them more at risk. That's why safety groups are pushing for technology to sound alarms when the human brain fails.

"I understand it's complicated and it's hard for people to understand how it can happen," Edwards said. "We believe our love can protect our kids."

Safety groups say when we have vehicles alert us to turn off our lights but no reminder to check for a baby in the back seat, it says we care more about a dead battery than having a dead baby,

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