

Three more children die in hot cars

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KANSAS CITY, MO. — Three more children have died of heat stroke after being unknowingly left in hot cars from Aug. 22-25, reports KidsAndCars.org, a national nonprofit child safety organization working to prevent injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles.

Eleven children in seven states have now died in just the month of August, bringing the total to 26 vehicular heat stroke deaths this year. In addition to deaths in Arkansas, Tennessee, Florida and New Mexico, the latest three cases were:

On Aug. 22 in Corpus Christi, Texas, a boy, 15 months, died in the family SUV. His mother had been caring for seven children, including four of her own, but when she returned home the boy was unknowingly left in the vehicle.

On Aug. 22 in Sheveport, La., a girl, 6 months, died after being left in an SUV in a hospital parking lot while her father, a trauma doctor, worked inside.

On Aug. 25 in Lowell, Mass., a boy, 9 months, died after being inadvertently left behind in a vehicle by his parents.

“A sad coincidence was that the hospital parking lot death happened the same day and time a press conference was being held outside a children’s hospital in Kansas City to call attention to similar tragedies,” noted Janette Fennell, founder and president of KidsAndCars.org.

KidsAndCars.org fully supports the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA’s) new program aptly entitled, “Where’s Baby, Look Before You Lock.” NHTSA’s muscle behind a national campaign to help raise awareness about the predictable and preventable tragedies that take place in overheated vehicles speaks volumes about how much they are committed to ending these unthinkable fatalities. David Strickland, NHTSA administrator, who has committed to bring down the number of heat stroke deaths to zero, was in Kansas City last week to show his strong support for working together to save the lives of the incredibly ‘precious cargo’ that travel in the back seats of our vehicles.

Fennell also was a speaker at the event at Children’s Mercy Hospital, sponsored by NHTSA. She noted that through KidsAndCars.org’s “Look Before You Lock” educational campaign, the first of its kind, the organization has distributed over 150,000 information cards to hospitals nationwide. She also encouraged the use of technology in vehicles to alert parents that a child has been left behind. “Technology now tells us if our car headlights are left on when we exit our vehicle. It seems we’ve been more concerned about preventing a dead car battery than a dead baby,” Fennell said.

Speakers also included Jodie Edwards, Ph.D., whose family suffered a tragedy when she inadvertently left her daughter Jenna, nearly 11 months old, in a hot car while she was at work as a professor at a small Christian university in Ohio. She thought she had taken every precaution possible to protect her daughter and her older brother. Yet her brain somehow ‘flipped a switch,’ causing her to mistakenly believe she had dropped off Jenna at the baby sitter’s on the way to work. “I have talked to dozens of families who have lost children to vehicular heat stroke,” Edwards said. “The only thing we all have in common is that none of us realized our love wasn’t enough to protect our children from our imperfect brains.”

Safety Tips from KidsAndCars.org

KidsAndCars.org provides the Lock Before You Lock BE SAFE tips on a card being distributed to new parents as part of the education packets hospitals send home with new parents:

Back seat — Put something in the back seat so you have to open the back door when leaving the vehicle — cell phone, employee badge, handbag, etc.

Every child should be correctly restrained in the back seat.

Stuffed animal — Move it from the car seat to the front seat to remind you when your baby is in the back seat.

Ask your baby sitter or child-care provider to call you within 10 minutes if your child hasn't arrived on time.

Focus on driving — Avoid cell phone calls and texting while driving.

Every time you park your vehicle open the back door to make sure no one has been left behind.

For additional information, statistics and charts specific to child vehicular heat stroke visit

www.kidsandcars.org/heatstroke.html

For further details about ways to keep children safe in and around vehicles, please visit www.KidsAndCars.org

<http://www.emporiagazette.com/news/2012/aug/30/three-more-children-die-hot-cars/>