

## One Decision: Tragic Results – Please Look Before You Lock (Video)

Posted by [Stefanie Zucker](#) on July 25, 2013 · [11 Comments](#)

***“It could never happen to me.” “I would never leave my child alone in the car – not for a minute.” “No GOOD parent would ever forget their child!”***

But it happens every day. According to [KidsandCars](#) on average 38 children die in hot cars each year, about one every 10 days from heat-related deaths after being trapped inside motor vehicles. This year alone there have been 23 child vehicular heat-stroke deaths. And this is not counting the life-altering injuries experienced by the children who survive.

### ***It happens...***



Children climb into unlocked cars to play. A child is sleeping in the back-seat and a parent “cracks open the window” and runs into the store for “just one thing” (...illegal in some states but in a NHTSA survey, 25% of parents admitted they had done this at least once). A spouse / partner / caregiver carefully buckles the baby into the car seat to drop them off at daycare. Maybe it wasn’t their day to drive...or maybe something distracts them for just one second. It’s just a little departure from the usual morning routine – only this time they forget the baby sleeping in the back seat (...more likely now since the American Academy of Pediatrics changed their [guidelines](#) to recommend that children remain rear-facing in car seats until they reach the age of two. A parent looking in the rear-view mirror no

longer sees their child’s face – just the back of the car seat – whether their child is in it, or not).

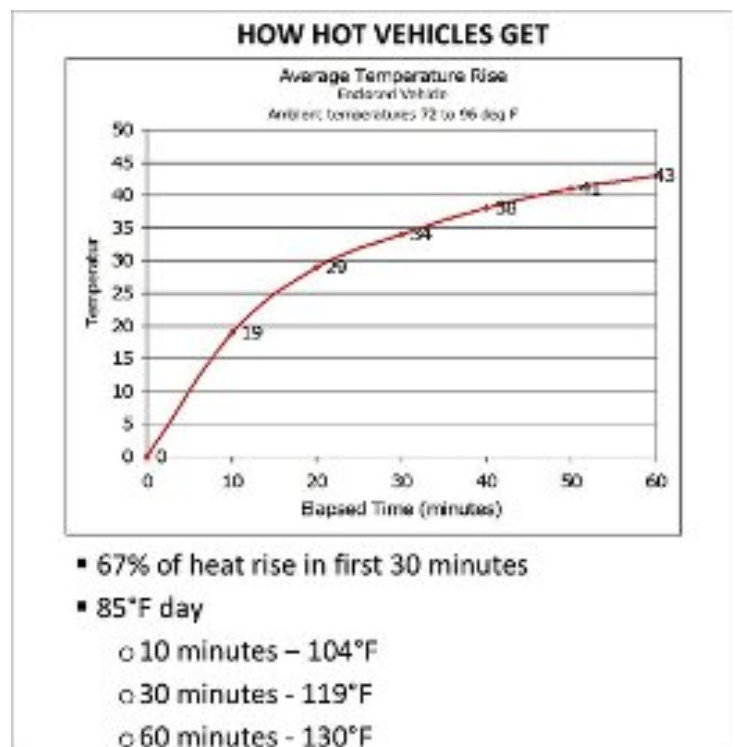
### ***It happens...***

...and it doesn’t have to be 100 degrees outside for the consequences to be devastating. According to NHTSA’s report on “[Unattended Children and Cars](#)”, even cool temperatures in the 60s can cause the temperature to rise well above 110 degrees Fahrenheit inside your car. The inside temperature can rise almost 20 degrees F within the first 10 minutes”. Within an hour the temperature jumps around 50 degrees F. If the outside temperature is in the low 80’s F, the temperature inside the vehicle can reach deadly levels in only 10 minutes. Slightly rolling the window down has almost no impact on these temperature increases.

Take a look at this simulation produced by the SafeKids organization of how fast a car can heat up when exposed to direct sunlight

Children’s bodies – in particular infants and children under 4 years of age – are at greatest risk for heat-related illness. They absorb more heat and are less able to lower their body heat by sweating. Because a child’s thermoregulatory system is not fully developed, their bodies warm at a rate 3 to 5 times faster than an adult’s. Hyperthermia occurs when the body produces or absorbs more heat than it can dissipate. A core body temperature of 107 degrees F is considered lethal because cells are damaged and internal organs shut down.

A core body temperature of 107 degrees F is considered lethal because cells are damaged and internal organs shut down.



## ***It happens...***

To the most loving, caring parents...the most responsible caregivers. These are not “those horrible people who should never have been allowed near children”. Take a minute to read [Kristie Reeves-Cavaliero’s story](#) about the day her husband Brett took one wrong turn and drove to the office instead of dropping their beloved daughter Sophia (Ray Ray to those who loved her) off at daycare. It wasn’t until they met for lunch later in the day that they realized something was wrong. By that time Ray Ray had been in his truck for 3 hours. An hour and 19 minutes later she was gone.

But this isn’t just Ray Ray’s story. More than 1 in 5 kids who die of heatstroke in a car were supposed to be dropped off at daycare that morning – and no one questioned their whereabouts until it was too late. Now Kristie has made “[Ray Ray’s Pledge](#)” her lives’ work – to establish a “daycare safety net” and make sure this doesn’t happen to another child. Other parents have made similar pledges. To share the story of their children’s tragedies [here](#), in interviews, in every public forum possible – in the hopes of saving just one family the pain they have endured.



## **SO WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT ANOTHER TRAGEDY??**

### **Child Vehicle Heatstroke Prevention Tips from NHTSA:**

- **Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.** Never leave infants or children in a parked vehicle, even if the windows are partially open.
- Do not let your children play in an unattended vehicle. Teach them that a vehicle is not a play area.
- Make a habit of looking in the vehicle – front and back – before locking the door and walking away.
- If you are dropping your child off at childcare, and normally it’s your spouse or partner who drops them off, have them call you to make sure the drop went according to plan. Ask your childcare provider to call you if your child does not show up.
- Do things to remind yourself that a child is in the vehicle, such as:
  - Keep a large object such as a stuffed animal in the car seat when it’s empty. Move the stuffed animal to the front seat when you place the child in the seat as a visual reminder.
  - Place your purse, briefcase or something else you need in the back seat so that you will have to check the back seat when you leave the vehicle
- **If you see a child alone in a hot vehicle:** call the police. If they are in distress get them out as quickly as possible and cool the child rapidly. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately



### **Take Ray Ray’s Pledge**

- *You Pledge:* to call your child’s teacher if he or she will be late or absent
- *Teacher Pledges:* to call YOU immediately if your child does not arrive at his or her usual time

**[Download the KidsandCars Safety Checklist](#)** and keep it handy

**[July 31st is National Heatstroke Prevention Day](#)**

- Join the Office of Emergency Medical Services at NHTSA in a day of social media conversation and help them get the word out about the dangers of heatstroke when children are left in cars. @NHTSAGov will be tweeting and posting on Facebook every hour on the hour from 10am – 5pm using the hashtag #heatstroke. Please join them...

For more info and sample tweets click [here](#)

***“If you think it can’t happen to you, then it could and it might... Tell yourself it COULD happen to me and then do whatever it takes to make sure it doesn’t.” ...kidsandcars.org***

**And if you ever catch yourself saying...“I’ll only be gone for a moment” ... please do two things:**

1. **Consider the following question:** If someone gave you a million dollars – would you leave it sitting there unattended in your car – even for a moment? Isn’t your baby’s life worth more?
2. **Consider watching this video...and then maybe even share it:**

*Before you do, know that it is very graphic and may be upsetting...so please think twice before you watch it.*

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNDWN8KDVSM&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNDWN8KDVSM&feature=player_embedded)

***Please also know that this was a re-enactment – no one was harmed in the making of this film***

Read more articles by [Stefanie Zucker](#)

#### **About the Author**



**[Stefanie Zucker](#)**

Stefanie Zucker is President and co-founder of Pediatric Medical Devices and Managing Director and co-founder of Axios Partners, a strategy consulting firm. After a number of years spent researching the safety issues associated with transporting children on ambulances she became a child health safety advocate and formed Pediatric Safety with a goal of creating a world-wide movement of parents and caregivers inspired to protect the health and safety of kids. Stefanie is a member of the [PedSafe Team](#)

<http://www.pediatricsafety.net/2013/07/one-decision-tragic-results-please-look-before-you-lock-video/#sthash.eBQRJgQU.dpuf>