

Governor, state agencies tackle vehicle heat deaths

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A parent breaks-down while explaining the dangers of hot cars on Georgia's summer days in an excerpt from a new state-promoted video. ATLANTA – Governor Nathan Deal, First Lady Sandra Deal, and leaders of several state agencies are calling for parents and caregivers of children to have heightened awareness this summer of the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles.

Officials hope a new YouTube video titled “Look Again,” featuring Georgia parents who have lost children to vehicular heatstroke accidents, will help raise awareness and prevent similar incidents in the future.

“During Georgia’s hot summer months, there is a higher risk of serious injury or death as a result of a child being left alone inside a vehicle,” said Deal. “Since 2010, seven children in Georgia have died due to vehicular heat stroke. I ask that all Georgians join me in preventing future loss of life by being aware of your surroundings and never taking the chance of leaving a child in a car, even for just a minute. Lives can be saved if we take the time to Look Again.”

“We as parents and grandparents work hard to keep our children safe and out of harm’s way,” First Lady. Deal said. “By increasing awareness and reminding your family and friends to Look Again, together we can prevent future tragedies here in Georgia.”

Bobby Cagle, Commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), said over 375,000 children across the state depend on approximately 6,000 child care providers daily most of whom transport children on a regular basis to and from home, after school to the child care center, and on field trips.

“We receive calls about incidents where children are left in vehicles from a few minutes to several hours and we investigate each incident,” Cagle said. “According to our records, in FY2012, 21 children were left in vehicles by child care providers; 17 in 2013; and already 18 in 2014. While thankfully we have not seen any child deaths in child care centers since 2011, we want these dangerous close calls to decrease. Consequently, safely transporting children will remain a focus for our agency.”

Cagle said “Look Again” is a message to anyone caring for a child — child care programs, teachers, parents, and grandparents — to always account for the children in their care as they drive them from place to place. “When you arrive at your destination, check the front and back of your car, and after you’ve looked, just to be sure, look again. There is absolutely no reason for a child to suffer or die in these conditions,” he stressed.

Officials hope the public will help pass the “Look Again” video along to family and friends using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. Featured in the video are interviews with Jenny Stanley, mother of six-year-old Sydney Marie Stanley of Evans, Georgia, who died in August, 2010, when she became trapped in the family car while it was parked in the garage, and Charles Green, father of two-year-old Jazmin A’mya Green, a toddler who died in June, 2011, after being left for two hours on a daycare van in Jonesboro, Georgia.

Officials are also asking the public to be their eyes and ears in the community, and if they see a child left alone in a vehicle, call 911 immediately; emergency personnel are trained to respond.

Agencies participating in the news conference included DECAL; Georgia Department of Public Health; Georgia Department of Human Services; Georgia Department of Public Safety; Georgia State Patrol; Governor’s Office of Highway Safety; Georgia Department of Transportation; and the Governor’s Office for Children and Families. Supporting partners included Safe Kids Georgia, Emory Center for Injury Control, Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Georgia Child Care Association (GCCA), Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS), Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia, and Voices for Georgia’s Children.

<http://wjcl.com/2014/05/27/governor-deal-and-state-agencies-bring-attention-to-children-in-hot-vehicles/>