

Is It Ever OK to Leave Your Kid in the Car?

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Sweet Treat Yields Bitter End for Alleged Burglar

It's a decision nearly all parents have faced: leave the kids in the car or take them inside?

And headlines surface every summer about babies who've died after being forgotten in a vehicle, reminding parents of the dangers of hot cars and children left behind for too long. But what if it's just for two minutes, while someone runs into the gas station? What if you're only a few feet away from the car? What if it's cold outside?

[Shoppers Rescue Toddlers Trapped in Hot Car](#)

[Toddler Saves Elderly Man Locked Inside Hot Car](#)

[Mom of Child Who Died in Hot SUV is Living a 'Nightmare': Lawyer](#)

Whatever the conditions, experts say it's never OK.

Janette Fannell, founder of the nonprofit Kids and Cars safety-awareness website, says parents need to know their kids could be easily kidnapped or choke on something when their parents aren't around.

"Another thing that happens is that kids knock cars into gear and it starts rolling -- kids have died this way, and there's certainly been enough property damage," said Fannell, whose organization tracks children's deaths in cars. "There was a case in Virginia last month where a little one was strangled to death by a power window.

"These things happen in a flash. It's not worth the risk," she added. "I know we're busy and I know we're tired. I have two kids and I know how hard it was to get them in and out, but I also have to admit to myself that if I left them in the car, it would only be for my convenience."

The speed at which cars overheat makes the situation even more dangerous, New York pediatrician Dr. Dyan Hes said. "Even if you crack the window," she said. "Kids can absolutely dehydrate. If it's over 104 degrees, they can start having seizures."

And overheating is a risk year-round, not just in the summer.

"We've had children die in vehicles when it was 57 degrees outside," said Fannell, who recently launched a [White House petition](#) to prevent heat stroke deaths in vehicles.

"In the first ten minutes, your car's temperature is going to spike about 20 degrees, on average. Right there, that can be very injurious or even fatal. Little children heat up three to five times faster than an adult; they don't have the ability to dissipate the heat."

Different factors affect how quickly a car heats up: the outside color, the interior color, sunroofs, outside temperature, etc. To be safe, just take your child inside with you, Fannell said.

An average of [38 children](#) die in hot cars every year, according to Kids and Cars.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/leave-kid-car/story?id=24584750>