

Dear Abby: Attentive parents will help stop child deaths in hot cars

BY JEANNE PHILLIPS, UNIVERSAL UCLICK 08/08/2014 2:25 PM 08/10/2014 8:19 PM

DEAR ABBY: It disturbs me greatly that we keep reading about parents leaving their children in cars, whether it be absentmindedness, stress or downright intentional. It needs to stop.

I'm hoping car manufacturers can come up with an idea — maybe a sensor that once the doors are closed and locked, should there be motion or a sound in the vehicle, the windows would automatically open, giving a passer-by a chance to see inside and maybe save a precious life. — Frustrated by "Premature" Angels

DEAR FRUSTRATED: You are not the only one who is disturbed by these recent tragedies. They are on the minds of a lot of people lately. Today's mail brought a suggestion from another reader who is hoping to put an end to the loss of these fragile young lives. A mother in Westland, Michigan, offered this:

DEAR ABBY: I have a suggestion for parents. TALK to your children when they are in the car with you. I always carried on a conversation, sang or counted to my kids, even newborns, and continued through the years they were rear-facing and forward-facing. It helped them to learn their ABCs, count, and even know where streets were.

It was also a running reminder that someone very special was with me. I never listened to the radio, unless it was nursery rhymes on DVD or toddler songs. It not only helped me teach my children, but it also made driving fun and safe for the tiny passengers in my car. — D.W.K.

READERS: A nonprofit group called KidsAndCars suggests that parents "place something they will need (when exiting the vehicle), such as a cellphone, handbag or briefcase, near the child in the back seat. Or keep a large stuffed animal in the child's car seat when it's not occupied. When the child is in the car seat, place the stuffed animal in the front passenger seat as a reminder that the child is in the back.

"And tell the child's day care center or baby sitter that they will always be called if your child isn't coming in as scheduled. If the child is absent without an explanation, the day care center or baby sitter is expected to contact a parent or another designated caregiver."

I would not recommend an automatic device because it could fail.

Tell, or don't tell?

Write Dear Abby at DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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