

Help, don't judge parents who forget kids in cars, says a Richardson mom who had her own close call

By Nancy Churnin nchurnin@dallasnews.com 6:50 pm on June 8, 2013



Destiny DeLaRosa and her family

Kudos to Destiny DeLaRosa, a Community Voices columnist from Richardson, who [shared her experience of almost forgetting her two-year-old toddler in the car](#).

“I had just pulled into the parking lot at work when I felt it — little feet kicking the back of my seat,” she writes. “That’s when I had the most horrifying realization of my life: I had forgotten to take my son to day care. I had forgotten he was even in the car.”

More than 600 kids have died from heatstroke in cars, according to a list of nontraffic fatalities listed by the KidsAndCars.org database. In May, we learned about the tragic [death of 1-year-old Victoria Marks](#), after her mother left her in a hot car as she reported for work at a DISD school.

After I wrote about [ideas that could help preoccupied parents remember their precious cargo](#), such as Baylor Irving’s Backyard Buddies program, I heard from a flood of people who said they couldn’t understand how a teddy bear left in the passenger seat when a child is in the car seat in back could make a difference. They said forgetting a child under any circumstances is something they cannot understand, that this is something that they would never do.

That’s why I think it’s so brave that Destiny, a devoted mother of four, is so upfront and honest about her almost-tragedy.

After the incident, she writes, “I was glued to the news every time there was another incident — another heartbroken, guilt-ridden family. The judgment for these caregivers that used to come so easy has now melted away to a shared agony for their situation, because the scary reality is that this could happen to any of us...we’re all guilty of doing thoughtless things all the time. However, usually those lapses in memory and attentiveness don’t end up costing us the life of our most precious loved ones.”

Ever since the incident, Destiny has become a supporter of any tips that help caregivers remember their babies. She started putting her phone and wallet in the back seat so she would be forced to look back there before leaving her car. She started talking to her baby even if he was asleep.

And because she feels we all need to look out for each other, she writes she has started looking into other people’s cars whenever she walks through parking lots. If she sees a car seat, she glances to see if it is empty.

I wanted to applaud when I read her final statement: “This summer, it will happen again. So rather than accepting it as a sad and inevitable part of Texas summers, let’s watch out for one another.”

Reading her column is a great place to start: <http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/local-voices/headlines/20130606-destiny-delarosa-i-forgot-my-son-was-in-the-car-and-it-changed-everything.ece?action=reregister>

<http://healthblog.dallasnews.com/tag/kids-and-cars/>