Activity Page

Staying Prepared: Exiting a Submerged Car

What do we have?

> A parked car with car seats installed

Parenting behavior

- ☐ Communicating
- ☐ Designing/guiding
- ☐ Nurturing
- ☐ Responding
- ☐ Supporting learning

How can we do it?

1. Park somewhere safe with the engine off. Buckle both your child and yourself into your seats.
2. Close your eyes. Release your own seat belt first, then reach back and unbuckle your child without looking. You may not be able to see in a real emergency, so practice finding the buckle by feel.
3. Say the SWOC steps out loud:
   - S – Seat belts off. Yours first, then your children's. If your car goes into water, you have 1 minute to get out before it's too late.
   - W – Window open. Roll the nearest side window down right away.
   - O – Out. Everyone goes out through the window.
   - C – Children first, oldest to youngest.
4. If your child is old enough, let them practice pressing their own buckle. Tell them they should only unbuckle when a grown-up says so.
5. Talk about it with your child afterward the way you would after a fire drill. "Even though we will probably never need it, we practiced so we know what to do."

What's in it for us?

Social-emotional

a. Knowing what to do in an emergency helps children feel capable. Practicing calmly gives your child a sense of a plan rather than a sense of fear.

Connecting across development

> **Motor:** Practicing unbuckling their car seat gets easier as fine motor skills develop in the fingers.

Safety tip

Be sure your child is developmentally ready to know how to unbuckle their car seat. Just because they physically can does not mean they have the reasoning ability to keep from doing it while the car is moving. Practice only when the car is parked.

Note: This activity page was written by Kids and Car Safety with funding sponsored by Honda.

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Continued learning

Take a look at your car's windows. Some are made of laminated glass, which will not break—the only way out is to roll them down. Check the small marking in the corner of each window to see which kind you have.

As children grow into different types of car seats, try practicing the exit activity at each change.

If you add another baby and another car seat, practice the order in which you would get to each car seat.

Book sharing

Read books about firefighters, lifeguards, or other helpers. Talk about how they practice safety long before anything happens, so they know what to do.

Observing my child's development ...

Reflecting with my child ...

Keeping it going ...

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