

**Twittercue:** #KidsAndCars.org offers #heatstroke warning cards for #newparents thru hospitals nationwide.

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **KidsAndCars.org launches national safety awareness program for hospitals to educate new parents about heat stroke danger**

### ***‘Look Before You Lock’ cards explain how memory lapses can place children in danger when inadvertently left in cars***

Leawood, Kan. – July 13, 2011 ... KidsAndCars.org announces an innovative new pilot program to distribute safety cards through hospitals nationwide to educate new parents about how memory lapses can result in children suffering heat stroke and even death in hot cars. The “Look Before You Lock” program is the first of its kind to provide life-saving information at the very beginning of their baby’s life about the dangers of inadvertently leaving children alone in a vehicle.

“Educating new parents will help prevent tragic heat stroke deaths by giving them practical steps to jog their memory to take their children out of the car,” says Janette Fennell, founder and president of KidsAndCars.org, a national nonprofit child safety organization working to prevent injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles.

Available in either English or Spanish, the cards will be distributed as part of the free information packets given to new parents when leaving the hospital. KidsAndCars.org is working in cooperation with Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc., which provided a grant to fund the program launch. “We support the important work of KidsAndCars.org in elevating this issue to a national level,” said Ed Bradley, regulatory affairs manager, Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc. “Vehicle safety is an issue that crosses all populations and communities, and Toyota strives to address this vital issue in a comprehensive way. This campaign is a great first step in educating the public in the prevention of injuries and fatalities to children in motor vehicles.”

Hospitals have been highly successful in stressing the importance of infant car seats, in many cases even requiring parents to prove – before leaving the hospital – that they know how to correctly restrain their baby.

“Lack of sleep while caring for a newborn and changes in family routines can have lethal consequences,” Fennell points out. “It’s just as important that parents learn to be cautious about leaving children unattended in vehicles as they are about leaving them alone near a swimming pool or in a bathtub.”

Administrator David Strickland of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration commended KidsAndCars.org’s efforts: “With NHTSA’s focus on child passenger safety, we applaud any program that helps alert parents and caregivers to the risks of leaving children alone in vehicles. On hot summer days in particular, we encourage parents to make it a habit to look in their vehicles — both front and back — before locking the door and walking away.”

To request cards, hospitals simply need to notify KidsAndCars.org of the number of babies that are born at their facilities.

Individuals may also download and print copies of the card at: <http://www.KidsAndCars.org/pr/parent-card.pdf>.

Safety tips on the card include the memory device, BE SAFE:

**B**ack seat – Put something in the back seat of your vehicle that requires you to open the back door every time you park – cell phone, employee badge, handbag, etc.

**E**very child should be correctly restrained in the back seat.

**S**tuffed animal – Keep a stuffed animal in your child’s car seat. Place it on the front passenger seat as a reminder when your baby is in the back seat.

**A**sk your babysitter or child care provider to call you if your child hasn’t arrived on time.

**F**ocus on driving – Avoid cell phone calls and texting while driving.

**E**very time you park make it a routine to open the back door of your car to check that no one has been left behind.

“This is the first program of its kind,” Fennell noted. “New parents are highly motivated to do whatever it takes to keep their new baby safe, so this is the perfect time to present this information.”

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**About KidsAndCars.org:** Founded in 1996, KidsAndCars.org is a national nonprofit child safety organization dedicated to preventing injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. KidsAndCars.org promotes awareness among parents, caregivers and the general public about the dangers to children, including backover and frontover incidents, and heatstroke from being inadvertently left in a vehicle. The organization works to prevent tragedies through data collection, education and public awareness, policy change and survivor advocacy.