



JOHNSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

dedicated to the prevention of disease and promotion of wellness for our community.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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A FIVE SECOND WALK COULD SAVE A CHILD'S LIFE **Drivers, Parents and Young Children to Participate in Safety Activity**

(Olathe, KS - **November 16, 2006**) Safe Kids Johnson County, KIDS AND CARS, and the Pilot Club of Shawnee Mission, KS are launching "Spot the Tot," a new program to prevent children from being injured or killed in driveways, parking lots and sidewalks.

On Saturday, November 18, 2006, from 9:30am - 11:00am "Spot the Tot" is being demonstrated in the parking lot at the Johnson County Health Department, 11875 S. Sunset in Olathe. As part of Spot the Tot, drivers and children will participate in activities to show some of the dangers children face in driveways and parking lots. Additional activities will educate drivers and children on other non-traffic related risks including children being left alone in cars and trunk entrapment. Cars equipped with devices such as cameras and sensors specifically designed to "spot the tot" will be available for demonstration.

Spot the Tot is a nationwide program that teaches parents, drivers, caregivers and children new safety habits to increase awareness about small children sharing the same space as vehicles. This program was born out of necessity with the increasing number of children reported as killed or injured around cars and not just as passengers.

Almost 2,500 children per year ages 1-14 reported to emergency rooms with non-fatal motor-vehicle backover injuries in the United States from 2001-2003. During that same period, the CDC reported on average 229 fatal injuries per year for children ages 1-14. Many of these injuries and deaths occurred at home or in driveways or parking lots.

"Ten percent of deaths to children involving motor vehicles are not reported as having happened on public roads," says Dr. Leon Vinci, Director of Public Health. "Many of these preventable injuries and deaths occur in driveways or parking lots when drivers, many of whom are loving family members, fail to see children near their vehicles. Often, a five second walk around your car before you get in could save a child's life."

Safe Kids Johnson County offers three easy tips to help keep children safer around cars.

- Caregivers are urged to firmly hold the hand of children when near vehicles.
- Drivers are cautioned to look for children, even if they do not have children of their own. That means adults in parking lots and driveways where children could be playing nearby should do an additional safety check.
- Drivers should walk all the way around a parked vehicle to check for kids, toys and pets before entering the car and starting the motor.

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Pilot Club of Shawnee Mission, KS