



## NEWS RELEASE

KidsAndCars.org

<http://www.kidsandcars.org/>

### Contact:

Janette Fennell, 415-336-9279 or [Janette@KidsAndCars.org](mailto:Janette@KidsAndCars.org)

## Four month-old is 11th baby to die in Texas this year and 11th Heat-related Vehicular Death in August Nationwide.

August 26, 2010 – A family in Texas is grieving over the death of their four-month old who succumbed to hyperthermia when left in a hot car yesterday.

Sadder still, he is the 39th child to die this year of heat-related vehicular death; and 2010 is on track to be the worst year ever recorded for kids dying in hot vehicles.

“Our mission is to inform the public of the risks vehicles pose to children and advise that children are dying in hot vehicles at an alarming rate. It is a tragedy that is largely preventable,” said Janette Fennell, founder and president of KidsAndCars.org. “We are beseeching the media to alert the public to end their complacency and take steps today to reduce deaths. We offer many resources for print and broadcast media.”

**What can adults do to prevent these deaths?** Nearly 50% of the deaths this year resulted from children getting into an unlocked vehicle on their own. A child’s body temperature rises 3-5 times faster than an adult’s, making them more vulnerable to temperature changes. And even with the windows partially down, the temperature inside a parked car can reach 125 degrees in just minutes. A child has died of heat-related vehicular death on a 60 degree day.

- Vehicles should always be locked and the parking brake set; even in the garage or driveway.
- Never leave keys and/or remote openers where kids can reach them.
- Make sure all young passengers exit a vehicle when adults do.
- When a child is missing, check vehicles and car trunks immediately.
- If you see a child alone in a vehicle, get involved. If they are hot or seem sick, get them out as quickly as possible. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

Sadly, most of the other half the children who’ve died were unknowingly ‘forgotten’ by an adult caregiver who became distracted when they left the vehicle.

A common reaction is, “Who could do that? I could never forget my child!” But a combination of lack of sleep, stress and change in routine (common for parents with young children) results in changes in memory retrieval patterns that impede brain function with deadly consequences.

Eighty-seven (87%) of children who have died due to vehicular heat stroke are ages 3 and younger.

### To reduce deaths KidsAndCars.org advises:

- Never leave children alone in or around cars; not even for a minute.

- If you observe a child or children alone in a car, seek help immediately; call 911. If no help is available and/or the child is listless or shows signs of distress, break a window away from the child to dispel the heat and get the child out. In XX states, it is illegal for a child to be left in a car alone.
- Put something you'll need like your cell phone, purse, employee ID or brief case, etc., on the floor board in the back seat.
- Form the quick habit of always opening the back door of your vehicle every time you reach your destination to make sure no child has been left behind. This is the "Look Before You Lock" campaign.
- Keep a large stuffed animal in the child's car seat when it's not occupied. When the child is placed in the seat, put the stuffed animal in the front passenger seat. It's a visual reminder that anytime the stuffed animal is up front you know the child is in the back seat in a child safety seat.
- Make arrangements with your child's day care center or babysitter that you will always call if your child will not be there on a particular day as scheduled. This is common courtesy and sets a good example that everyone who is involved in the care of your child is informed of their whereabouts on a daily basis. Ask them to phone you if your child doesn't show up when expected. Many children's lives could have been saved with a telephone call from a concerned child care provider. Give child care providers all your telephone numbers, including that of an extra family member or friend, so they can always confirm the whereabouts of your child.
- Be extra vigilant about keeping kids safe in and around cars during busy times, schedule changes (like back to school) and periods of crisis or holidays.
- Use drive-thru services when available. (restaurants, banks, pharmacies, dry cleaners, etc.)
- Use your debit or credit card to pay for gas at the pump.

Safety tips provided by KidsAndCars.org can be implemented quickly and easily.

An FTP site is available for the media to easily download 15 and 30-second Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to help raise the level of awareness. [www.s-films.com/ftp/kids.html](http://www.s-films.com/ftp/kids.html).

A map that provides information about the number of vehicular heat stroke fatalities for each state can be found at: [www.facebook.com/#!/pages/KidsAndCarsorg/128148590541866?ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/KidsAndCarsorg/128148590541866?ref=ts)

The national child safety organization, KidsAndCars.org, has been the leader in bringing this issue to the nation's attention. For over 12 years KidsAndCars.org has been collecting data and working towards the reduction and/or elimination of children dying in hot vehicles. We believe, education, public awareness and technology is what is needed to prevent these unthinkable tragedies.

#

**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. KidAndCars.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.