

10 Tips That Could Save Your Child's Life By Helping You Avoid a Fatal Distraction

By [LAUREN HARTMANN](#) | July 9th, 2013 at 5:00 am

Last week a friend of mine posted this [story from The Washington Post](#) about horrifying incidents of parents forgetting their children in the backseat of cars and the resulting deaths that occurred due to heatstroke. [The stories](#) were terribly sad, but also incredibly eye-opening. At a glance it may sound completely preposterous that a parent could ever forget their living-breathing child in the backseat of a car and honestly, my first thought was, "What kind of idiot could forget their kid in a car?" But as I read on, I realized that it happens far too often and it happens to otherwise intelligent, loving, and well-meaning parents.

According to [Kids and Cars](#), "On average, 38 children die in hot cars each year from heat-related deaths after being trapped inside motor vehicles. Even the best of parents or caregivers can overlook a sleeping baby in a car; and the end result can be injury or even death." A study of the statistics makes it even easier to realize that this awful phenomenon of forgetting children in cars is no respecter of persons. "What kind of people forget children in cars?" you may wonder.

Well, [The Washington Post](#) says:

"The wealthy do, it turns out. And the poor, and the middle class. Parents of all ages and ethnicities do it. Mothers are just as likely to do it as fathers. It happens to the chronically absent-minded and to the fanatically organized, to the college-educated and to the marginally literate. In the last 10 years, it has happened to a dentist. A postal clerk. A social worker. A police officer. An accountant. A soldier. A paralegal. An electrician. A Protestant clergyman. A rabbinical student. A nurse. A construction worker. An assistant principal. It happened to a mental health counselor, a college professor and a pizza chef. It happened to a pediatrician. It happened to a rocket scientist."

A rocket scientist people. I don't know about you, but that one blew my mind. If someone with that kind of brain power can forget their child in a car, then it's feasible that it could happen to any of us. In our culture of type-A, multi-tasking and cell phone distractedness, something like this could happen in an instant and I want to do my part to raise awareness and share some ideas for ways that we can keep these tragic incidents from occurring and possibly even save your child's life.

<http://www.babble.com/toddler/10-tips-that-could-save-your-childs-life-by-helping-you-avoid-a-fatal-distraction/be-a-good-neighbor/>



Click through for tips that will help you avoid a needless heat-related tragedy.

LOOK before you LOCK.

It may sound overly simplistic, but get into the habit of remembering to "look before you lock." Always stop to check your car for anything left behind. Not only will this ensure that you don't end up leaving your child in an unattended car, but it may also keep you from leaving other things in the car as well.



Get a backseat mirror

Invest in a backseat mirror if you don't already have one. Read up on them first as there have been some who have voiced potential safety concerns, but we have one and it's a great way to check in on your little one, making it less likely to forget that they are in the backseat.



Stash your stuff in back

Make it a habit to always leave your bag, groceries, or other belongings in the backseat. This will require you to open the back door to grab your stuff and in turn your little ones as well.



Stuffed animal place holder

Place a large stuffed animal in your child's car seat when you get out of the car as a placeholder, then every time you put your child in their car seat you can move the stuffed animal up to the front passenger seat as a reminder that your child is in back. Just repeat this every time you put your child in the car.



Institute a no talk/no text rule

Aside from the fact that it is illegal in many states (all states?), commit yourself to sticking to a no talking or texting while driving rule. I realize that it is legal to talk on your phone while driving with a hands-free device, it can be distracting and make you lose track of important things during your drive. Instead, use your drive-time to talk or sing songs with your child.



Check-in texts

Many of the parents who forgot their children in hot cars shared the common denominator that there had been a change in their schedule—perhaps switching childcare drop-off responsibilities with their partner. If this is the case then make sure to send check-in texts to your partner, making sure all of the ducks are in line and the children are where they should be.



Use the drive-thru

Take advantage of the drive-thru whenever possible, as it is one less chance to forget your child in the car.



Childcare check-in

If your kids are in childcare, you can ask your childcare provider to make sure to call you if your child hasn't arrived within 15 minutes of their typical drop-off time. Quite a few of the parents from the incidents that I read about had forgotten to drop their children off at daycare and driven directly to their day's activity and then forgotten them in the car.



Be a good neighbor

If you ever walk past a car with a child left unattended, please do your part and contact the authorities to come provide help. Don't ever assume that the child is only being left there for a moment and that a parent will "be back soon." It's better to be safe than sorry and even in cooler weather, death from heatstroke is still possible since little ones have a much more difficult time regulating their body temperature than adults do. One of the incidents I read was of a child who died of heatstroke while left in a car during 60 degree weather (the car got to 110 degrees). It can happen faster than you think.



Reminder alarms

If you're a Type-A kind of person, maybe setting alarms to remember to utilize these check-in methods could be a good option for you.