

Safe Kids Columbus Reminds Parents that Hot Weather and Vehicles can be a Deadly Combination for Kids

Overheating deaths are preventable with a few important tips

Columbus, GA — As Spring approaches, bringing with it warmer temperatures, Safe Kids Columbus is working to increase awareness and urge caregivers to never leave children alone in a vehicle. With the goal of having no more children die from heat stroke when they are “forgotten” in cars, Safe Kids Columbus reminds parents and caregivers to always check for sleeping children before leaving a vehicle.

Between 1998 and 2010, 461 children died from heat stroke because they were left unattended in vehicles that became too hot for them to survive. “A child’s core body temperature rises 3 to 5 times faster than an adult’s and unattended children have no way of protecting themselves in a hot vehicle” says Christy Hubbard, Safe Kids Columbus coordinator. “The overall goal of this campaign is to make sure no more children will die in 2010 because they were unattended in a vehicle. We want parents and caregivers to take precautions so that this tragedy does not happen to them.”

More than 50 percent of the children who died from heat stroke were forgotten by a caring adult who became distracted when they left the vehicle. Thirty percent of kids who died from hyperthermia were left unattended by an adult or gained entry into an unlocked vehicle and became trapped and overcome by heat. It takes only minutes for a child to be at risk of death and serious, permanent injury in a hot car. Drivers must keep car doors locked and keys out of reach from young children.

Safe Kids Columbus urges all adults who transport children to take the following steps:

- Call 911 if they see a child unattended in a vehicle.
- Never leave children alone in a car - even for 1 minute.
- Set your cell phone or Blackberry reminder to be sure you drop your child off at daycare.
- Set your computer “Outlook” program to ask you, “Did you drop off at daycare?”
- Place a cell phone, PDA, purse, briefcase, gym bag or whatever is to be carried from the car on the floor in front of the child in a back seat. This forces the adult to open the back door and observe the child.
- Have a plan with your child care provider to call if your child does not arrive when expected.
- Keep keys and remote entry key fobs out of children’s reach.
- Lock all vehicles at all times.
- Check cars and trunks first if a child goes missing.

For more information on preventing hyperthermia deaths, please call Safe Kids Columbus at (706) 321-6183 or visit www.ggweather.com/heat and www.safekids.org/nlyca. Be sure to NEVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD ALONE in a car.

Safe Kids Columbus works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Its members include public safety agencies, teachers, EMTs, county commissioners, health educators, nurses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, public health organizations, local government, and many others concerned about the well being of our children. Safe Kids Columbus is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Columbus was founded in 1998 and is led by the Columbus Health Department.

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