

## Hot Temperatures and Cars - Be Aware of the Dangers to Children

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Between 1998 and 2009, 445 children died from heat stroke after being left unattended in a vehicle; that is an average of 37 child deaths per year. As temperatures are soaring during the summer months, Safe Kids Kansas reminds parents to check their vehicles for sleeping children before leaving a vehicle.

Heat poses more risks to children than to adults; a child's core body temperature can rise 3-5 times faster than an adult when left in a hot automobile. A child's core body temperature can even accelerate at the rate on days with mild temperatures. Heat stroke occurs when the core body temperatures reaches 104 degrees Fahrenheit and can cause permanent injury or death; a core body temperature of 107 degrees Fahrenheit is considered lethal. In just ten minutes, the temperatures inside a closed vehicle can rise 19 degrees above the temperature outside. After an hour the two temperatures can differ by 45 degrees or more, even with a cracked window. Many children are intentionally left in vehicles by parents or care takers that do not understand the severity of the danger in their actions. More than 50% of children who died from heat stroke were left unattended by a parent or care taker who suddenly became distracted and left the children in the vehicle. Parents and care takers must also keep keys out of a child's reach; 30% of children gained entry into an unlocked vehicle and then became trapped inside the vehicle and overcome by heat.

Safe Kids Kansas offered several tips for parents and care givers:

1. Teach children to not play in, on, or around vehicles.
2. Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even if the window is cracked.
3. Place items, such as a purse, gym bag, briefcase, etc., in the backseat of an vehicle so at your next stop you will not accidentally forget a sleeping child in the vehicle.
4. Always lock a vehicle's doors and trunk and keep key-less entry devices out of a child's reach.
5. If a child goes missing, check the car and trunk first.
6. If you observe a child unattended in a vehicle, call 911.

For more on this topic see [Heat stroke causes an average of 37 child deaths per year.](#)

[Demonstration of how quickly a car heats up in moderate temperatures.](#)