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OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



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Dangers of Heatstroke in Cars

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood wants to remind parents, families and caregivers about the dangers of heatstroke and leaving children in hot cars.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, in 2021, 23 children died of heatstroke across the United States. The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood urges all parents and caregivers to do these three things: 1) NEVER leave a child in a vehicle unattended; 2) Make it a habit to look in the backseat EVERY time you exit the car; 3) ALWAYS lock the car and put the keys out of reach. And, if you ever see a child left alone in a hot vehicle, call 911 right away.

Here are some helpful tips to make sure it doesn't happen to you. Remember:

- Never leave a child alone in a parked car, even with the windows rolled down, or air conditioning on.
- Always look in both the front and back of the vehicle before locking the door and walking away.
- Never let children play in an unattended vehicle. Teach them a vehicle is not a play area.
- Always lock your vehicle doors and trunk and keep the keys out of a child's reach. If a child is missing, quickly check all vehicles, including the trunk.

If dropping a child off is not part of your normal routine, come up with some ways to remind yourself that the child is in the car. Here are a few ideas:

- Place an item that you keep on you, like a briefcase or purse, in the back seat next to the car seat, so that you'll always check the back seat before you leave the car.
- Call your spouse or partner after you drop the child off to make sure you didn't forget.
- Have your child care provider call you if your child doesn't show up.
- Write a note and place it on the dashboard of the car. Or set a reminder on your cell phone or calendar.

If you see a child alone in a hot vehicle, call 911 immediately.

Remember: kids in hot cars are a deadly combination. Don't take the chance. Look before you lock.

For more information visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/heatstroke>.

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