Don’t Leave Children Alone in a Car

Hundreds of children each year are involved in potentially fatally accidents when left unattended in a vehicle. According to Virginia Department of Social Services, in 2013, 44 children in the United States died as a result being left in a hot car. Most of the deaths were children who were forgotten by their parents and children. Temperatures can rise as much as 19 degrees in 10 minutes in an enclosed vehicle. Even when temperatures are only 70, car windows act like a greenhouse and temperatures can reach 125 degrees quickly.

The Safe Kids Worldwide offers the following safety tips:

Make it part of your everyday routine to account for all children in your care. Set up backup systems to check and double-check that no child is left in the vehicle.

Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle—even if the windows are partially open or the engine is running with the air conditioning on. Vehicles heat up quickly; if the outside temperature is in the low 80s, the temperature inside a vehicle can reach deadly levels in only 10 minutes, even with a window rolled down 2 inches.

Always make a habit of looking in the vehicle—front and back—before locking the door and walking away.

Get in touch with designated family members if a child who is regularly in your care does not arrive as expected.

Create reminders to ensure that no child is accidentally left behind in the vehicle. Place an item that is needed at your final destination in the back of the vehicle next to the child or place a stuffed animal in the driver’s view to indicate that a child is in the car seat.

Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately if you see a child alone in a hot vehicle. If
he or she is in distress due to heat, get the child out as soon as possible and cool him or her down rapidly

Whatever the season, leaving children alone in cars is risky. In less than a minute, a child can climb out of a car seat and shift the car into gear. It only takes a minute for someone to break into a vehicle and abduct a child. For safety’s sake, never leave children unattended in a car, even for a minute. It's just not worth the risk.

Sources: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, kidsandcars.org, Virginia Department of Social Services, & Safe Kids Worldwide