

Parked Cars—Dangerous for Kids!

Child
Safety
Facts
2021

A vehicle is not a playground or a babysitter!

Every year, many children die in or around parked cars. Leaving a child in a car without an adult, even for a few minutes, is very dangerous. It is illegal in some states.

Death in a hot car

Tragedy can happen any time a parent or other caregiver leaves a baby or child alone in the car. On a sunny or warm day, vehicles heat up quickly, and children can easily get heatstroke. This can happen even when it is under 70 degrees outside and even when a window is down. Brain damage or death can happen in minutes.

Sometimes a busy parent, or one whose routine changes unexpectedly, accidentally leaves a child. Other times the child is left on purpose, such as to continue a nap. Some tragedies happen when a parent doesn't know a child has gotten into the car to play.

Prevention tips

- Check to make sure that all children are out of the car after you park it.
- Put your briefcase or purse on the floor of the back seat on every trip. This will remind you to look in back before leaving your vehicle.
- Make sure your childcare provider always calls you if your child is not dropped off as planned.
- Tell children to never enter a car alone.
- Check your car and trunk right away if your child is missing.



Kids left alone in cars

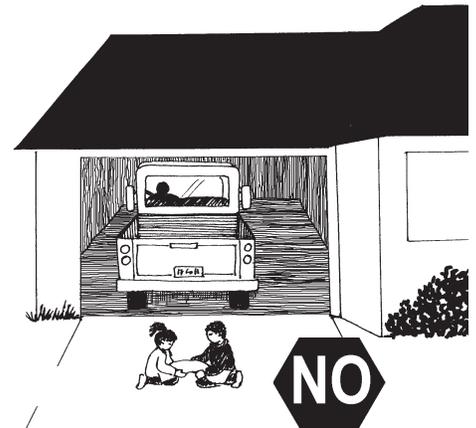
Never leave your child in a vehicle without an adult, even in his or her car seat. Even a brief stop could turn into a tragedy. These things do happen:

- Children (and pets) can get dangerously overheated even if they are left in the car for only a few minutes (see left).
- A child playing with the driver's controls may start the car rolling. Children learn how to make the car go by watching drivers.
- A child can be strangled if the window goes up while he or she is leaning out. This can happen in cars with windows that go up when the control switch is pressed down. Some cars now have safety windows.
- Seat belts can be dangerous when used for play. A child can be strangled by wrapping a shoulder belt around his or her neck.
- Children can get trapped in car trunks while playing.

Prevention tips

- Always take your child with you when you leave the car. Do not be tempted to leave your children alone when you go into a store for "just a minute."
- Keep doors of parked cars locked. Keep car keys out of a child's reach.
- Keep rear fold-down seats locked. This will help prevent kids from getting into the trunk.

Tell all your child's caregivers about the dangers of parked cars. Make sure they follow the prevention tips given here.



Driveway dangers

Be cautious when moving your vehicle in a driveway or parking area. Toddlers and young children use these areas for play and are sometimes run over—often by a family member.

All vehicles have blind zones in front and behind where the driver cannot see a child. Blind zones are biggest in tall vehicles like pickups, vans, and SUVs.

Prevention tips

- Make it a habit to walk around your car to check for children before getting in.
- Find other places for children to play. Teach them never to play in the driveway or parking area.

Resources

KidsandCars.org: 913-732-2792,
www.kidsandcars.org

NHTSA, In and Around the Car: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/parents-and-caregivers>
(For Spanish, select Español)

Safe Kids Worldwide: www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/and-around-cars

Make
Every Ride
A Safe Ride

