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**Mother & Child Health Coalition, Safe Kids Metro KC and Safe Kids Johnson County  
to mark Heat Stroke Prevention Day on Thursday, July 31**



**At least 18 children have died in hot cars already this year.**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. –The number of child heat stroke deaths in vehicles continues to mount. Each year, an average of 37 children lose their lives in this way, or about one every 9 days. Since the group Safe Kids Worldwide began tracking data, at least 670 children have died in these preventable tragedies. Heat stroke is the leading cause of non-crash vehicle fatalities for children 14 and younger, but can be prevented.

Safe Kids Metro KC, a program of Mother & Child Health Coalition, along with other local child-safety advocacy groups and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), will mark Heat Stroke Prevention Day on **Thursday, July 31, with a Press Conference at 1:00 p.m. at United Inner City Services, home of St. Mark Child and Family Services, 2008 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Kansas City, MO.** The purpose of the press conference is to raise awareness and educate parents and caregivers and the general public about ways to prevent children from dying in a hot vehicle. Volunteers will visit day care centers to distribute ***Where's Baby? Look Before You Lock™*** safety education cards for young parents.

Participating agencies will also post social media messages throughout the day, asking people to share the posts on Facebook and retweet using #heatstroke. "A change in routine, fatigue, distraction, anxiety – each can lead to a tragic momentary memory lapse," notes Regina Weir, coordinator of the Safe Kids Metro KC program. "It can happen to anybody, even the most loving and attentive parents." It has happened to teachers, a pediatrician, dentist, postal clerk, social worker, police officer, nurse, clergyman, electrician, accountant, soldier, assistant principal and even a rocket scientist.

A parked car can reach 125 degrees in minutes, even when the windows are partially open. Children are especially vulnerable to heat stroke, as their body temperatures rise three to five times faster than an adult's. All parents need to carefully follow the guidelines for placing car seats in the back seat – the safest place for children to ride. Additionally, babies should ride rear-facing in their car seats till age 2, according to the guidelines prescribed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. At the same time, parents must understand that while requiring children to ride in the back seat

has saved many lives, it also requires drivers to take extra precautions to avoid children from being unknowingly left alone in a vehicle. "Following **Look Before You Lock** safety education tips doesn't cost a penny, and provides several layers of protection so your child will not be unknowingly left in a vehicle," Weir added. "We never know when there might be a day that our memory fails us, so we urge parents to implement these easy-to-follow instructions so that they become a habit for them and all who care for their child."

#### **TIPS TO PREVENT HEAT STROKE / HYPERTHERMIA**

Together, we can reduce the number of child heatstroke deaths and near misses by remembering to ACT:

**A: Avoid** heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. Make sure to keep your car locked when you're not in it, so kids don't get in on their own. **If a child is missing, check the car and trunk right away.**

**C: Create** reminders by putting something on the back floorboard in front of your child such as a briefcase, a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination. Keep a teddy bear in the car seat when the child is not in it, and move it to the front seat when she is.

**This is especially important if you're not following your normal routine.**

**T: Take** action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. **One call could save a life.**

**Safe Kids Metro KC Coalition** - Part of a national network of Safe Kids Coalitions, Safe Kids Metro KC is a four-county effort to educate parents on how to prevent injuries to children under 19, through education and advocacy. Focus areas include motor vehicles, bicycle, pedestrian, drowning, safe sleep and home safety.

[http://www.mchc.net/programs/safe\\_kids\\_metro.aspx](http://www.mchc.net/programs/safe_kids_metro.aspx)

#### **TV Public Service Announcements**

Somebody Help Me! (30 Seconds)

<http://youtu.be/GQ6BC-oKHRA>

Oven (30 Seconds)

[http://youtu.be/qa\\_W-SFuwgU](http://youtu.be/qa_W-SFuwgU)

Oven (15 Seconds)

<http://youtu.be/HOcVdPkvSQ>

Heatstroke (30 Seconds)

<http://youtu.be/kYGAlagq-Wg>

Heatstroke (15 Seconds)

<http://youtu.be/3lDJ21oOIGw>

It Only Takes a Second (30 Seconds)

<http://youtu.be/T4wttLNSZiU>

It Only Takes a Second (15 Seconds)

<http://youtu.be/ALgDN71I9KU>

\* To learn more about the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA's) "**Where's Baby? Look Before You Lock.**" campaign, visit [www.safercar.gov/heatstroke](http://www.safercar.gov/heatstroke).

For the latest data on heatstroke, go to <http://www.ggweather.com/heat/>