

# How does a hot car affect kids?

Every year, children die from heat stroke as a result of being trapped in a car. Parents mistakenly think they can safely leave a child in the car during a “quick” errand. However, temperatures inside vehicles can rise to dangerous levels in minutes, even on a mild day. Heat is more dangerous to children than it is to adults. When left in a hot vehicle, a child’s body temperature may increase three to five times faster than adults may.

It is especially important to be aware of your child’s safety on days that it is 80°F or higher. Safe Kids recommends the following safety precautions to prevent heat-related injuries in cars:

- Never leave your child in an unattended car, even with the windows down.
- Always lock car doors and trunks and keep keys out of children’s reach. Watch children closely around cars.
- Check to make sure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination, particularly when loading and unloading. Don’t overlook sleeping infants.
- Make sure to check the temperature of the child safety seat surface and safety belt buckles before restraining children in the car.

Car trunks can also be hazardous. If children get trapped in the trunk on a warm day, heat stroke could lead to permanent disability or death in minutes. Follow these safety precautions:

- Keep rear fold-down seats closed to help prevent kids from getting into the trunk from inside the car.
- Keep car keys out of children’s reach and sight.
- Be wary of child-resistant locks. Teach older children how to disable the driver’s door locks if they become trapped in a vehicle.
- Contact your car dealer about getting your vehicle retrofitted with a trunk release mechanism.
- Teach children not to play in or around cars.
- Always lock car doors and trunks.
- If your child is locked inside a car, get them out and dial 9-1-1 immediately.

The family car parked in the driveway can also be dangerous. Unlocked cars pose serious risks to children who are curious. In 2000, one-third of all heat-related deaths occurred when children were playing, crawled into an unlocked car, and became trapped.



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Source: Safe Kids USA

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