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AS NEW YORKERS BRACE FOR INTENSE HEAT WAVE, THE NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES REMINDS PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS TO "LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK" – NEVER LEAVE A CHILD UNATTENDED IN A HOT CAR

In 2020, There Were 25 Child Hot Car Deaths Nationwide; ACS Reminds Parents to Always Check the Backseat Before Leaving & Locking Their Cars

NEW YORK, NY – As the National Weather Service forecasts an intense heat wave with temperatures climbing well above normal, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) is reminding parents to "Look Before You Lock" – never leave a child unattended in a car. With temperatures forecasted to soar, vehicles can heat up quickly, which can be extremely dangerous for children as their bodies heat up three times faster than an adult's, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. According to KidsAndCars.org, last year, 25 children nationwide died after being left in hot cars. ACS is urging parents and caregivers to always check the backseat of the car before leaving and locking it.

Throughout the summer, ACS will be sharing important tips with families about how to prevent hot car tragedies from occurring. For instance, to prevent a harried parent from forgetting a child in the back seat of a car, one might leave necessary items in the back seat (purse, wallet, key fob, cellphone, house keys, etc.). Before leaving the vehicle, the driver may check the back seat to retrieve the item before locking the car doors. For other parents, it might help to place a stuffed animal in the front seat of the car every time their child is in the back seat. The stuffed animal will serve as a reminder that the child is in the car. As always, anyone who sees a child left unattended in a parked car, should notify law enforcement immediately or call 911.

"We want to remind parents and caregivers of the dangers associated with hot temperatures and ensure they take precautions," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "Under no circumstance should a child ever be left alone in a car; even if it's for a short period of time. As we see intense temperatures forecasted for the next few days, New Yorkers should be aware of the danger of hot cars and the steps they can take to help keep children safe."

Heat illness occurs when the body cannot cool down. The most serious forms of heat illness are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke occurs when the body's temperature rises quickly and can rapidly lead to death. Keeping cool can be hard work for the body. This extra stress on the body can also worsen other health conditions such as heart and lung disease.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, heat stroke is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths in children under 15. Infants and children up to four years of age are at the greatest risk for heat-related illness, according to the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC).

In addition to “Look Before You Lock,” a new report from Consumer Reports revealed that in 2020, almost 38 percent of hot car deaths were children who gained access to a vehicle on their own. ACS is reminding parents to be extra mindful about keeping car keys and key fobs out of children’s reach.

ACS continues to educate parents on ways to keep children in New York City safe and healthy. In addition to its “Look Before You Lock” campaign, ACS continues to promote safe sleep practices for families with infants, and educate caregivers on how to prevent unintentional exposures to high-risk medications and household products in their homes. Through its primary prevention approach, ACS is working to reach families proactively with educational messages and services that can support healthy children, families and communities.

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