

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CHILDREN'S MERCY, KIDSANDCARS.ORG AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS DEMONSTRATE
DANGERS AND BUILD AWARENESS OF UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN VEHICLES**
Meeting today addresses risks, preventions and awareness

Kansas City, Mo - August 17, 2010 - At least 6 U.S. children died in hot vehicles since August 11th.

This heartbreaking news can only be met with the need to increase awareness about these predictable but very preventable tragedies. Just this year the number of vehicular heat stroke deaths is up to 35, an increase from last year's total of 33, with still more summer weather to come.

Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, KidsAndCars.org, Safe Kids and numerous safety organizations have joined together to increase awareness and urge caregivers to never leave a child alone in a vehicle. A coordinated strategy was unveiled to remind parents and caregivers to check for sleeping babies before leaving a vehicle and to keep car doors locked and keys out of reach from young children.

Between 1995-2009, five hundred thirty six (536) children died from heat stroke in vehicles that became too hot for them to survive. "A child's body heats up 3-5 times faster than an adult's, and young children have no way of protecting themselves in a hot vehicle," says Phyllis Larimore, RN, BSN, MPH, child passenger safety educator at Children's Mercy.

More than 50% of the children who died from heat stroke were unknowingly 'forgotten' by a caring adult who became distracted when they left the vehicle. The age when children are at greatest risk is when they are under 3. Approximately thirty percent (30%) of affected kids gained entry into an unlocked vehicle, became trapped and were overcome by heat. It takes only minutes for a child to be at risk of death and serious, permanent injury in a hot car.

Janette Fennell states, "The overall goal of the campaign we are launching today is to be sure no more children die in 2010 because they were unattended in a vehicle. We want parents and caregivers to take precautions so that this tragedy does not happen to them."

Children's Mercy Hospital and their partners urge all adults to take the following precautions:

- Call 911 if they see a child unattended in a vehicle.
- Never leave children alone in a car- not even for 1 minute.
- Place a handbag, cell phone, employee badge or whatever they will carry from the car on the floor in front of the child in a back seat. This makes the adult open the back door to ensure a child has not been inadvertently left in their car seat.
- Have a plan with your child care provider to call if your child does not arrive when expected.
- Keep keys and remote entry key fobs out of children's reach.
- Lock all vehicles at all times.
- Check cars and trunks first if a child goes missing.

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For more information, please contact:

- Janette Fennell, Founder and President KidsAndCars.org - (913) 327-0013
- Phyllis Larimore, Car Seat Program Coordinator at Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics – (816)-234-1607
- Howard Dickinson, Technical Trooper, Kansas Highway Patrol - (913) 782-8100 or HDickins@khp.ks.gov
- Katie Schatte, Coalition Coordinator at Safe Kids Johnson County - (913) 477-8312 or Katie.Schatte@jocogov.org
- Aaron Bartlett, Destination Safe Coalition at Mid America Regional Council - (816)474.4240
- Jan Null, CCM, Adjunct Professor of Meteorology at San Francisco State University - (408) 379-7500 or jnull@ggweather.com

Internet Resources:

- [Kids And Cars](http://KidsAndCars.org) - kidsandcars.org
- [Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics](http://ChildrensMercyHospitalsandClinics.org) – CMH.edu
- [Safe Kids USA](http://SafeKidsUSA.org) - Safekids.org
- [Golden Gate Weather Services](http://GoldenGateWeatherServices.com) - http://ggweather.com
- [Department of Geosciences, San Francisco State University](http://DepartmentofGeosciences.SanFranciscoStateUniversity.edu) - http://tornado.sfsu.edu

About Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics

Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, located in Kansas City, Mo., is one of the nation's top pediatric medical centers. The 314-bed hospital provides care for children from birth through the age of 18, and has been recognized by the American Nurses Credentialing Center with Magnet designation for excellence in nursing services, and ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of "America's Best Children's Hospitals." Its faculty of 600 pediatricians and researchers across more than [40 subspecialties](#) are actively involved in clinical care, pediatric research, and educating the next generation of pediatric subspecialists. For more information about Children's Mercy and its research, visit childrensmercy.org. For breaking news and videos, follow us on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).

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