



# Georgia State Council of the Emergency Nurses Association

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Tragedy Prompts Georgia's Emergency Nurses to Warn of the Dangers Facing Kids Left in Hot Cars**

### **Atlanta-area Toddler Dies of Heat Stroke After Being Left in Day Care Van**

Columbus, GA – The heat-related death of a two year old Clayton County, GA child has emergency nurses across the Peach State racing to raise awareness of the dangers children can face when summertime temperatures soar.

Published news reports say the toddler died Monday afternoon after being left in the van outside a Jonesboro day care center for two hours.

A record forty-nine children died in 2010 from heat-related injuries sustained from being left in hot vehicles. That's why Georgia's emergency nurses are partnering with KidsandCars.org to make the following information available:

KidsAndCars.org is warning parents and caregivers to take extra precautions to prevent leaving children alone in cars. Through May 31 this year 8 children had already died of heat stroke in vehicles - close to the record-setting pace of 2010 when 49 infants and children died.

"It's a record no one wants to see broken," says Janette Fennell, founder and president of KidsAndCars.org, a national nonprofit child safety organization working to prevent injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. Since the group began tracking data and working on the issue in 1998, more than 500 children have died in these preventable tragedies.

A child's body temperature climbs three to five times faster than an adult's, especially in a hot car. In less than 30 minutes, the temperature inside a car can increase 35 degrees. An infant can die in as little as 15 minutes even on a mild 75-degree day.

Unfortunately, even the most conscientious parents can overlook a sleeping baby in a car. "The biggest mistake people make is to think 'It couldn't happen to me,'" Fennell said. "Memory experts point out that if you've ever forgotten a pot left burning on the stove, you've seen how easy it is to have a dangerous memory lapse."

To prevent vehicular heat stroke deaths, KidsAndCars.org recommends learning the following safety tips:

**B**ack seat - Put something in the back seat so you have to open the door when leaving the vehicle - cell phone, employee badge, handbag, etc.

**E**very child should be correctly restrained in the back seat.

**S**tuffed animal - Move it from the car seat to the front seat to remind you when your baby is in the back seat.

**A**sk your babysitter or child-care provider to call you within 10 minutes if your child hasn't arrived on time.

**F**ocus on driving - Avoid cell phone calls and texting while driving.

**E**very time you park your vehicle open the back door to make sure no one has been left behind.

KidsAndCars.org also urges security personnel, parking lot attendants and the public to watch for children alone in a vehicle. Call 911 or the local emergency number immediately. If the child seems hot or sick, they should get them out as quickly as possible.

### **About the Emergency Nurses Association**

The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) is the only professional nursing organization dedicated to defining the future of emergency nursing and emergency care through advocacy, expertise, innovation and leadership. Founded in 1970, ENA serves as the voice of more than 37,000 members and their patients through research, publications, professional development, injury prevention and patient education. Additional information is available at ENA's web site - [www.ena.org](http://www.ena.org).

The Georgia ENA Council represents over 900 members all across the Peach State. Seven local chapters serve the Albany, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon and Savannah areas. For more information on the Georgia State Council, see our web site at [www.gaena.org](http://www.gaena.org).

### **About KidsandCars.org**

Founded in 1996, KidsAndCars.org is a national nonprofit child safety organization dedicated to preventing injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. KidsAndCars.org was the first to focus on preventing heat stroke deaths of children being inadvertently left in a vehicle. The organization works to prevent tragedies through data collection, education and public awareness, policy changes and survivor advocacy.

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