



# Keeping Children Safe In and Around Cars

Vehicles are equipped with many safety features designed to protect children and families. Even with these safety features, six common dangers have been identified for children who are playing near vehicles. Always supervise children when they are in and around vehicles. Review the following tips to learn how to limit a child's risk and teach them how to avoid these dangerous situations.

**Heatstroke:** Children die each year from heatstroke after entering a vehicle unnoticed or being left alone in a vehicle. Heatstroke can occur at any time of the year. Even in cooler temperatures, the vehicle can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. The inside temperature of a vehicle can rise almost 20° Fahrenheit within the first 10 minutes.



## Always:

Check the back seats of the vehicle before you lock it and walk away. Keep the keys out of a child's reach. Take action if you see a child alone in a car:

- If the child is not responsive or in distress, immediately call 911.
- Get the child out of the car and spray the child with cool water (not an ice bath).
- If the child is responsive:
  - Stay with the child until help arrives.
  - Ask someone to search for the driver.



**Trunk Entrapment:** Children are naturally curious and love to explore their surroundings. Unsupervised children may climb into the vehicle trunk and become trapped. Children being entrapped in vehicle trunks can suffer heatstroke, asphyxiation and death. To avoid entrapment, heed the following safety and prevention tips.



## Always:

- Check the trunk immediately if a child is missing.
- Lock the car doors and trunk. Place keys and remote entry devices out of a child's reach.
- Keep the rear fold-down seats upright and locked to keep children from climbing into the trunk from inside the car.

**Teach children that vehicle trunks are for cargo, not for playing.**

**Power Windows:** Children can hurt themselves with power windows. Children can be injured if a window closes on their finger, wrist, hand, or neck. Newer vehicles have child safety settings, "pull to close" switches, or power windows that reverse when it detects an object is in the path of the closing window or sunroof.



## Always:

- Properly secure children in an appropriate car seat.
- Activate the power window lock switch so children cannot play with the windows.

## Never:

- Leave children alone in the vehicle.
- Leave the keys in the ignition or in the "on" or "accessory" position when you exit the vehicle.



**Teach children to not play with window switches or climb on vehicle door armrests.**

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## Always:

**Seat Belt Entanglement:** A seated child is within reach of a seat belt and may become entangled if the seat belt is pulled all the way out and becomes wrapped around the head, neck, or waist. Seat belt entanglement can happen in the blink of an eye. Never leave your children alone in or around a vehicle for any reason.



- If a child in a car seat has an unused seat belt within reach:
  - Buckle the unused seat belt,
  - Pull it all the way out then feed the excess webbing back into the retractor.



**Teach children that seat belts are not toys.**



**Back Over:** A back over incident typically occurs when a car coming out of a driveway or parking space backs over a child. Many cars are equipped with rearview video cameras or warning sounds, but do not rely on these devices to detect what is behind the vehicle. Children are unpredictable.

## Teach children to:

- Play away from cars and to keep toys and bikes out of the driveway.
- Move away from a vehicle when a driver gets into a car or the car is started.
- Stand to the side of the driveway or sidewalk to be easily seen as a vehicle is backing out of a driveway or parking space.

## Always:



- Walk around the vehicle to check for children before backing up. Actively check mirrors while backing up slowly
- Roll down a window to hear what is happening outside of the car.

**Vehicle Rollaway:** Leaving a child unattended in a vehicle with the keys in the ignition is never safe. Unattended children can accidentally cause the vehicle to roll, or even drive away, especially if the engine is running. Vehicles equipped with a keyless ignition or push-button start feature can rollaway when the vehicle has been turned off and not shifted into park.



## Always:



- Ensure the vehicle is in the “Park” before shutting the vehicle off and exiting the vehicle.

## Never:

- Leave the keys in the car.
- Leave the keys in the ignition or in the “on” or “accessory” position when you exit the vehicle.

**Keep vehicle locked when unattended and supervise children carefully when in and around vehicles.**