

The Danger of Leaving Children Unattended in Vehicles

Parents sometimes leave children unattended in vehicles while they pick up or drop off other children at child care centers and homes. Recently a parent's vehicle was stolen from the seemingly secure drive way of a child care center. The parent had just walked the short distance to the door of the facility to pick up a child, leaving a young child in the running vehicle. This incident literally happened in the blink of an eye. Fortunately the authorities located the vehicle a short time later, abandoned, with the unharmed child still inside.

Please alert parents to the dangers of leaving children in vehicles, running or not, even for brief periods. The risks of the child being kidnapped or the vehicle being stolen are very real but are not the only serious consequences that can happen. There have also been numerous instances where children managed to get a vehicle in gear, crashing the vehicle and injuring themselves or others.

Although we hope that everyone will be motivated to take these precautions in order to keep children safe, there are other important reasons to avoid leaving children unattended in vehicles. If something were to happen to a child left in a vehicle, the parent could face child maltreatment allegations and criminal charges for child endangerment.

Again, please urge parents to avoid leaving children in vehicles when they are at your facility and in other situations, such as grocery store and gas station stops.