



Governor's Office for
Children and Families



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Georgia Chapter



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Media Contact: Reg Griffin
404-656-0239 (office)
404-245-9902 (cell)
reg.griffin@dec.al.ga.gov

Look Again: Governor and Mrs. Deal and State Agencies Warn of the Dangers of Leaving Children Unattended In Vehicles

Officials Urge Greater Awareness to Protect Georgia's Youngest Citizens

ATLANTA, Ga., (May 31, 2016) – In a news conference today Governor Nathan Deal, First Lady Sandra Deal, and leaders of several state agencies called for families and caregivers of children to have heightened awareness of the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles. Officials hope the news conference and a new public service announcement will help prevent children's heatstroke deaths this summer.

“During our state's hot summer months, there is a higher risk of serious injury or death as a result of a child being left alone inside a vehicle,” said Gov. Deal. “Since 2010, 11 children in Georgia have died due to vehicular heatstroke. I ask all Georgians to join me in preventing future loss of life by being aware of your surroundings and never leaving a child in a car, even for just a minute. Lives can be saved if we take the time to Look Again.”

“We as parents and grandparents work hard to keep our children safe and out of harm's way,” said Mrs. Deal. “By increasing awareness and reminding your family and friends to Look Again, together we can prevent future tragedies here in Georgia.”

Amy M. Jacobs, Commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), said over 370,000 children in Georgia are cared for daily by approximately 5,000 child care providers most of whom regularly transport children. “When we receive reports of incidents where children are left in vehicles, we investigate each incident,” Jacobs explained. “In FY2014, 18 children were left in vehicles by child care providers; in FY2015 eight children were left in vehicles; and so far in FY2016, seven children have been left. All of these children survived, and, thankfully, we have not seen any heat stroke related deaths in child care centers since 2011. But one child left unattended in a vehicle is one child too many. As a result, safely transporting children remains a focus for our agency.”

Jacobs said “Look Again” is a message not just to child care programs and teachers but to anyone caring for a child – parents, grandparents, other family members, neighbors and friends – to always account for the children in their care as they drive them from place to place. “When you arrive at your destination, check the front and back of your car, and after you’ve looked, just to be sure, look again. There is absolutely no reason for a child to suffer or die in these conditions,” she stressed.

State officials hope the public will help distribute a new “Look Again” public service announcement to family and friends using social media. The video is posted on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6Q-GA7tfkE> and on DECAL’s Facebook and Twitter pages.

Officials also ask the public to be their eyes and ears in the community, and if they see a child left alone in a vehicle, call 911 immediately; emergency personnel are trained to respond.

Agencies participating in the news conference included DECAL; Georgia Department of Public Health; Georgia Department of Human Services; Georgia Department of Public Safety; Georgia State Patrol; Governor’s Office of Highway Safety; Georgia Department of Transportation; Governor’s Office for Children and Families; and the Georgia Children’s Cabinet. Supporting partners included Safe Kids Georgia, Emory Center for Injury Control, Get Georgia Reading Campaign, Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Georgia Child Care Association (GCCA), Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS), Georgia Family Connection Partnership, and Voices for Georgia’s Children.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia’s Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decals.ga.gov.