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Governor and Mrs. Deal Join State Agencies in Warning About Dangers of Leaving Children Unattended In Vehicles

“Look Again” Campaign Urges Greater Awareness to Protect Georgia’s Youngest Citizens

ATLANTA, Ga., (May 28, 2018) – For the fifth consecutive year, Governor Nathan Deal, First Lady Sandra Deal, and leaders of several state agencies are calling for families and caregivers of children to have a heightened awareness of the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles. Officials hope a news conference held today at the State Capitol and a new public service announcement will help prevent heatstroke deaths of children this summer.

“With hot weather already here, I want all Georgians to think about the sweltering heat that accompanies this season,” said Gov. Deal. “I ask all parents, guardians, grandparents, loved ones and anyone responsible for caring for children to never leave a child alone in a vehicle, even for a single minute. These terrible tragedies are preventable and we all play a part in making sure they don’t happen by always accounting for young ones when driving from place to place.”

“We as parents and grandparents work hard to keep our children safe and out of harm’s way,” added 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 337,000 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 children left in vehicles by providers, we investigate each incident,” Jacobs explained. “During FY2016 eight children were left in vehicles by child care providers statewide; during FY2017, 11 children were left in vehicles; and so far in FY2018, 10 children have been left. Thankfully all of these children survived, but one child left unattended in a vehicle is one child too many and, despite our best efforts, these numbers show there is still work to be done.”

State Warns of Dangers of Leaving Children in Vehicles - Page 2

Jacobs said “Look Again” is a message not only for 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.

Jacobs said technology is helping in the effort. “From sensors in car seats and vehicles to phone apps like Waze which have reminders for when you reach your destination,” she said. “All of these help build habits to check the backseat after driving. And if these aren’t options, you can always place a stuffed animal in your passenger seat as a reminder that your child is in the back.”

State officials hope the public will help share a new “Look Again” public service announcement with family and friends using social media. The video is posted on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaMP18AO-1k> and on DECAL’s website (www.decals.ga.gov), as well as Facebook and Twitter pages. Last year’s PSA has been updated with our new logo and is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gvu5RKk8ieo>.

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 supporting the campaign include 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; 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 Quality Rated, Georgia’s community powered child care rating system.

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.