

## **North Carolina Records First Child Death from Overheating in a Vehicle Since 2009**

*DHHS Stresses Parent Awareness to Prevent Hyperthermia Especially as Temperatures Climb*  
RALEIGH – The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services reminds parents to exercise vigilance to keep children out of unattended vehicles following the death this month of a 2-year-old Burke County child. This is the first such child death from hyperthermia in North Carolina since 2009.

July is the peak time of year for child deaths in hot vehicles, officials say. With temperatures expected to hover around 100 degrees this weekend, the danger is heightened; however, even on a moderately warm day, temperatures inside a vehicle can rapidly reach fatal levels. According to a report released this week by the North Carolina Child Fatality Prevention Team, there were 19 deaths of children in hot vehicles between 1999 and 2009. There were no deaths in 2010 or 2011. The report concludes that most of the deaths occurred when children accessed a vehicle on their own or with other young children. Other circumstances included children forgotten in the vehicle by a caregiver or intentionally left in the vehicle while a caregiver ran an errand.

“This is a tragic reminder for parents to be vigilant in ensuring that a child is never in a vehicle alone,” DHHS Secretary Al Delia said. “Cars are not places for children to play.”

Safe Kids North Carolina, a childhood injury prevention organization, offers the following prevention tips:

- Never leave a child alone in a vehicle. Check to make sure all children exit the vehicle when you reach your destination.
- Lock the doors when your vehicle is parked. Teach children that cars are not places to play.
- Busy parents have a lot on their minds, so give yourself a reminder. Place your purse, briefcase or other important items in the backseat next to your child’s car seat to help you remember to look in the back before leaving the car.
- Set a reminder on your cell phone or other mobile device to remind you to drop off children at school or daycare when routines change.
- Make an agreement with your child’s school or daycare that you will be notified if your child is not dropped off at the normal time.
- If you see a child or pet left unattended in a vehicle, call 911 immediately.
- Check vehicles and trunks first if a child goes missing.

For a copy of the report, visit [www.ocme.unc.edu](http://www.ocme.unc.edu). Find more prevention tips at [www.ncsafekids.org](http://www.ncsafekids.org).