



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Brian P. Kemp
Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DECAL Spotlights Dangers of Leaving Children in Vehicles

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

ATLANTA, Ga., (May 20, 2021) – For the eighth consecutive year, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is calling for families and caregivers of children to increase awareness of the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles. This year’s “Look Again” campaign comes just ahead of Memorial Day, the unofficial start of summer, and hopes to ensure that families, child care providers, and the public understand how to prevent pediatric vehicular heatstroke during this time.

Officials will hold a virtual news conference on **Thursday, May 27, 2021, at 10:00 AM EST** using this link: https://dec.al.ga.gov.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIsf-CoqT0pEt2gcPoXG_HvFZBikEsdFLE8

“As more Georgians are getting back on the road, it is critically important to remember that our children are our most precious cargo,” said Governor Brian P. Kemp. “That’s why Marty and I stand with DECAL in urging everyone to ‘Look Again’ and protect the health and safety of Georgia’s children. Please join us in following these simple steps to make a difference, prevent pediatric vehicular heatstroke, and save lives.”

DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs said hundreds of thousands of children in Georgia are cared for daily by licensed child care providers, most of whom regularly transport children. Currently, to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Governor Kemp has issued an Executive Order limiting child care providers to only transporting children to and from school. Field trips are still prohibited.

“If a silver lining can be found in a global pandemic, it might be that most families have stayed close to home, have simpler schedules, and less distractions,” said Commissioner Jacobs. “Nationally, 24 children died from pediatric vehicular heatstroke in 2020 and, tragically, one child in North Carolina has died in 2021. When DECAL receives reports of children left in vehicles by providers, we investigate each incident. During FY2020, nine children were left in vehicles by child care providers statewide. In FY2021, two children have been left. While these numbers have improved overall, we cannot become complacent.”

Jacobs said “Look Again” is a message not only for child care programs and teachers but for 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: “Sensors in car seats and vehicles and phone apps signal reminders when you reach your destination,” she said. “These technological resources 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.”

Officials also remind the public to act responsibly and quickly if they see a child left alone in a vehicle by calling 911 immediately; emergency personnel are trained to respond.

For more information, visit www.decals.ga.gov or www.noheatstroke.org.

About DECAL

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) 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.decal.ga.gov.