

# When forgetting can have tragic consequences



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Is your life so busy that you become forgetful at times? I know mine is! My schedule is so full that I would truly be lost without my calendar and reminders. Even with the help, I am still quite forgetful at times.

Like when I forgot to be the Tooth Fairy back when my children believed. Forgetful as I may be, I am still quick on my feet. So when my teary eyed daughter said, “The tooth fairy forgot about me,” I didn’t miss a beat as I replied “Oh no, she didn’t forget. It’s Sunday. The Tooth Fairy doesn’t work on Sundays!” That excuse worked the first time. But when it happened again, it was not a Sunday. I quickly thought of something just as clever that time ... and the time after.

Oh how my brain is mush sometimes with so much going on, places to be, things to do, people to take care of, etc. On one occasion I even forgot to pick my daughter up from an after school activity. I figured it out when I got home and my boys were there but my daughter was not. In that moment, my heart stopped and the blood drained from my face as I frantically drove to the school hoping my daughter would forgive me and not remember this moment for the rest of her life. When I rolled up, the

devastated look on her face nearly broke my heart in two. There were no excuses. With tears in my eyes and a lump in my throat, I profusely apologized to my sweet girl and asked for forgiveness. Oh what a terrible moment and epic “mom fail” that was. I hope that my heroic mom moments always over shadow that awful one!

What about you? What sorts of things do you forget? Have you ever had a parent fail moment like mine? How do you keep track of everything? And what if there was a moment in your life that was so bad that you couldn’t even ask for forgiveness of your forgetfulness?

I recently came upon an article that revealed such a time. A father had much on his mind as he headed out for the day. He was following a different routine as he was supposed to take his child to daycare on his way to work. Instead, perhaps on auto-pilot on that warm summer day, he headed straight to the office, forgetting to drop his baby off along the way. At the end of the workday he returned to his car to find his child in the back seat, deceased due to heatstroke. Can you imagine the horror of such a moment? And what if I told you that there are so many more stories like his?

After reading that father’s story, I did a bit of research and was surprised by my findings. Since 1998, an average of thirty-seven children die every year from hyperthermia related to being left

in a hot car for one reason or another. What a staggering figure! I’ve heard of this happening with pets in hot cars but not often of children. So far this year, sixteen children have died and we aren’t even half way through the summer. My heart breaks for the sweet ones who have died as well as the parents who forgot. There are also cases of children being left in hot cars due to a choice a parent or caregiver has made to leave them there for a short period and also from children climbing into hot cars and not being able to get back out. But most cases are from forgetfulness.

An otherwise loving parent gets busy, distracted or forgetful in his or her daily routine. The wealthy, the poor and the middle class do it. Parents of all ages and ethnicities do it. Fathers are just as likely as a mother to do it. Grandparents do it. It happens to absent-minded and organized parents alike. It’s happened to a dentist, police officer, accountant and an electrician. It’s happened to a hospital CEO, college professor, and pediatrician.

With such a list and frequency—one child every nine days—how might this number be reduced?

1. Being educated about the subject is important—which is why I chose to share this story and statics with you today.

2. Share this with others! Perhaps, like me, people you know don’t have a clue about how many people this has happened to and sharing this



**Sometimes, being forgetful can have dire consequences.**

may just be enough to save a child’s life.

3. Have routines that lessen the chances of this happening to you or loved ones. The acronym KARS helps you remember

Keep something you need in the backseat like a cell phone—even when you run an errand on your own. This will get you in a habit of always looking in the backseat before you leave your vehicle. Plus, it may remove the temptation of using your cell phone while you drive.

Always lock the doors and put your keys or fobs

away—even if you park in the garage. This will prevent children from playing in hot cars without your knowledge.

Review your schedule with childcare providers. Ask them to always call you if your child is supposed to be there but does not show up.

See something, do something. If ever you see a child alone in a car, no matter the temperature outside, do not hesitate to call 911.

KARS 4 Kids is also an app you can get for your cell phone, specifically designed to alert you to take your child

out of the car. Check it out: [KARS4Kids.org](http://KARS4Kids.org)

We’d all like to think this would never happen to us or people we love. I’ll bet the parents it’s happened to would have believed the same thing before it did. Let us learn from the moments of the thirty-seven families affected each year by such horrible “parent fail” moments. Share this with others, remember K.A.R.S. and check out the app.

*Article courtesy of Babcock Auto Care.*