

Car Safety Article March 2011

Want to leave your baby in the car seat unattended for minutes? Think again!



First, think of the **potential dangers** to your baby or child: these have been known to happen - kidnapping, choking, suffocating under the blanket, car fire, car being towed, children wiggling or sliding out into an unsafe position in the seat. Your car could be hit by another car while you are out. Every year about 860,000 children were kidnapped in USA, according to Ms. Sabrina Sessa, Co-founder of P.E.C.E. of Mind in Washington. Her podcast is available at http://www.parentingafieldguidelive.com/index.php?post_id=528982

Second, think about the **legal mess** including criminal charges of abandonment and endangerment of a child. It is a crime under Child Abuse based on Texas Family Code to leave a young child unattended in any place. You can be arrested and convicted of the crime of child abuse. Criminal consequences include: imprisonment, probation or parole, loss of custody or visitation with your children.

To make safer decisions, families should relax and plan their daily activities so that sufficient time is allowed to conduct daily activities and enjoy each moment with your child and family. Studies show that when there are multiple risk factors present, the risk is greater. For example, lack of preparation or knowledge of critical issues surrounding parenting, financial or other environmental stressors, difficulty in relationships and depression or other mental health problems can all lead to neglectful behavior of child and abuse. A parent may lack an understanding of their children's development stages and hold unreasonable expectations of their abilities. These circumstances, combined with the inherent challenges of raising children, can result in otherwise well-intended parents causing their children harm or neglecting their needs. This can explain why almost 50% of child abuse incidents fall into the child neglect while physical abuse accounts for 25%, sexual abuse accounts 15% and others 8%, according to the *Prevent Child Abuse Texas*, a non-profit organization. <http://www.preventchildabusetexas.org/>

This article has been edited for space. It was provided as a public service announcement by one of our parents. Thank you!