

**JULY IS PURPLE RIBBON MONTH**   
Keeping Kids Safe in and around Motor Vehicles

(Bakersfield, CA) – The Kern County Department of Human Services, with support from First Five Kern, the Kern County Fire Department, Kern County Sheriff’s Department, the Bakersfield Police Department and the California Highway Patrol, are once again launching “Purple Ribbon Month” in memory of Kaitlyn Marie Russell. “Kaitlyn’s Law”, passed in 2001, makes it a citable offense to leave children under the age of 6 unattended in a motor vehicle without the supervision of someone at least 12 years of age. The Law was named for 6 month old Kaitlyn Marie Russell, who died on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2000, after being left behind in a hot van by a caregiver.

In Kern County, July is designated as Purple Ribbon Month in memory of Kaitlyn and all the children who have lost their lives to preventable injuries in and around cars, and in order to educate and increase public awareness about all of the dangers of leaving children unattended in or around motor vehicles. **Already this year, nine children have died due to hyperthermia in the United States.** [www.kidsandcars.org](http://www.kidsandcars.org)

On July 18, 2023, the Kern County Board of Supervisors will proclaim July as Purple Ribbon Month. The purpose of the Purple Ribbon Month Campaign, is to remind our community, it only takes a few minutes for a car to heat up to temperatures that a young child’s body cannot withstand.

In 2022, in the United States, there were 36 hot car deaths; all of these children were under the age of six. In 2021, 23 children lost their lives due to hot car deaths. These deaths are 100% preventable and we hope by bringing awareness, this number becomes zero.

Please follow our Purple Ribbon Month Campaign on our social media platforms, @KernCountyDHS, our website [www.kcdhs.org](http://www.kcdhs.org), and billboards, and remind our community how important it is to **#LookBeforeYouLock**.

We encourage all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Kern County a safer place for children and families.

For more information or to schedule an interview, contact Jana Slagle at 661.633.7104 or 661.342-8054 or [slaglej@kerndhs.com](mailto:slaglej@kerndhs.com).

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