

Houston Day Care Center Sued over Toddler's Death in Hot Van

The family of a 3-year-old who died after being left for more than four hours in a Houston day care center's van in late July has sued the operator for negligence, according to a post on the website of **Androvett Legal Media & Marketing**.

The post continues:

Raymond Pryer Jr., known as R.J., was found unresponsive in the van around 7 p.m. on July 20, when his father arrived to pick him up at Discovering Me Academy. Records indicate the high temperature in the area on that date was 97, with a temperature inside the van reaching at least 113 degrees.

Discovering Me Academy and its employees failed to have systems in place to safeguard its students while on field trips, according to the lawsuit filed by Raymond and Dikeisha Whitlock-Pryer. Law enforcement reports indicate the little boy was on an outing with 28 others when the van returned to the northwest Houston day care around 2:30 p.m.

"This was a horrible, preventable death, and no child should be put at such risk," R.J.'s parents said in a statement released by their attorney, Larry Wilson, of Houston's Lanier Law Firm. "We are devastated, and we are angry. We trusted this day care center with the life of our son, who has now been taken away from us because of their simple, uncaring neglect. Our hope is that this lawsuit makes other operators and regulators take notice and work to prevent anything like this from happening again. That would be the greatest legacy that R.J. could leave this world."

State records reveal that the day care was cited for several

violations involving its van in 2015. One infraction included not having an electronic child safety alarm, which is used to notify the driver that a child has been left in the vehicle. The day care was also cited for not reporting a wreck involving the van in a timely manner, and for a driver's failure to know the number of children in her group.

A Harris County grand jury investigation into the death is pending, while the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is conducting its own investigation. This is the third heat stroke death of a child in Texas this year.