

Children being left alone while parents gamble - Indiana casinos report 37 incidents since May 1999

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IN - Children have been left unattended at Indiana's riverboat casinos more than three dozen times while their parents or other guardians were gambling during the past 14 months.

Records found 37 instances involving an estimated 72 abandoned children since May 1999

A few months later at the same casino, another mother, Larelle Phillips, of Grand Rapids, Mich., was investigated for leaving her daughters, ages 9 and 10, inside a car with the windows rolled up in sweltering heat. A security officer patrolling the parking garage in 90-degree heat spotted the children and quickly moved them to his air-conditioned car. Her four children and their two cousins, ages 1 to 11, were left alone for 25 minutes.

Two grandmothers, one from Hammond and the other from Riverdale, Ill., were evicted from Empress Casino in Hammond after they left four children, ages 5 to 11, at a pavilion bench last Oct. 14.

Trump Casino security crews saw a man driving into the casino last September with two little girls. The man, who was from Iowa, was told that children aren't allowed inside the casino and shouldn't be left alone on the premises. He was seen leaving, but about 25 minutes later a valet parking attendant spotted the girls, ages 3 and 8, inside the car crying.