

## Grief after mom's SUV kills child

Xerxes A. Wilson Staff Writer Published: Monday, June 18, 2012 at 11:20 a.m.

A Houma woman mourning the death of her child says she hopes her loss may prevent similar tragedies from occurring.

### Safety tips

KidsandCars.org suggests these tips to avoid unwittingly backing into a child in your car.

- Walk around and behind a vehicle prior to moving it.
- Know where your kids are. Make children move away from your vehicle to a place where they are in full view before moving the car. Know that another adult is properly supervising children before moving your vehicle.
- Teach children that parked vehicles might move. Let them know that they can see the vehicle; but the driver might not be able to see them.
- Consider installing cross-view mirrors, audible collision detectors, a rearview video camera or some type of backup detection device.
- Measure the size of your blind zone behind the vehicle you drive. A 5-foot-1-inch driver in a pickup truck can have a rear blind zone of approximately 8 feet wide by 50 feet long.
- Teach your children to never play in, around or behind a vehicle, and always set the emergency brake.
- Keep toys and other sports equipment off the driveway.

The child was killed just before noon Saturday, when Sandra Lopez-Barragan was backing her SUV out of her Evelyn Avenue driveway and struck her 16-month-old daughter Jayce Salazar.

"Hopefully," she said Sunday, "this will help people know the danger and this will not happen to any other families." Barragan, grief-stricken and speaking Spanish through a translator, said her daughter was playing with other children inside her home during a power outage Saturday morning. Barragan said she left to go to the store, not knowing her daughter had wandered into the driveway through a door that had not been completely shut.

Another child tried to warn Barragan as she backed out of the driveway in her Jeep Cherokee, but it was too late, Barragan said.

After being struck by the SUV, Jayce was taken by ambulance to Leonard Chabert Medical Center, where she died, Houma Police Chief Todd Duplantis said in a news release.

"She was lovely," said Ramiro Hernandez, Jayce's uncle, who translated Barragan's account of the accident. "She didn't talk much, but she was always smiling and she was never afraid of anything, always smiling and playing."

No charges were filed, and police said alcohol was not involved.

No data are kept locally on the number of people killed by cars backing into them, but such accidents have prompted concern among safety advocates.

In February, the federal Transportation Department was close to enacting a rule, mandated by Congress, that would have required manufacturers to include rearview cameras in all U.S. vehicles built after September 2014. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates the action would save 95-112 lives each year and prevent more than 7,000 injuries to children and adults.

Federal officials said they want more time to study the action to ensure the rules are effective. Auto manufacturers say the rule will add \$2.7 billion to new-vehicle costs, much of it passed along to consumers. About 45 percent of new vehicles manufactured this year offer rearview cameras as standard equipment, officials say.

Kids and Cars, a national safety-advocacy group that has lobbied for the mandated rearview cameras, estimates that 50 children are backed over by vehicles every week across the U.S. Of those, 48 are treated in emergency rooms and at least two die. The group says it has documented at least 1,000 such deaths between 1990 and 2010, including 19 in Louisiana.

"This problem is only going to get worse unless we work for better visibility behind the vehicles we drive," the group says on its website, KidsandCars.org. "The government does not have any regulations about what you should be able to see behind a vehicle at this time. Because we are driving larger, longer and higher vehicles, we are seeing many more backover incidents."

<http://www.houmatoday.com/article/20120618/ARTICLES/120619675>