

It's Not Child's Play in a Driveway

by [Janie](#) on FEBRUARY 15, 2013 in [BABIES](#), [CHILD SAFETY](#), [TODDLERS](#)



How is this for a nightmare? As difficult as it might be, imagine running over a child in your vehicle. Disturbing, right?

Now even harder, try to picture the child was your own, and this horrible incident occurred in your driveway at home. One word comes to mind: UNTHINKABLE, right? Wrong!

Unfortunately, this isn't a rare occurrence. It is reported EVERY week in the U.S. that at least 50 children are being backed over by vehicles! Shocking to think this is happening every day. More importantly, this is completely 100% preventable! Nothing is worse than the loss of your own child, but when a child's death is preventable or unintentionally caused by a family member, caregiver or someone visiting, words cannot begin to express the incomprehensible pain and devastating distress a family will endure. I wish I could erase seeing the child death certificates and hearing from grieving families about these heart wrenching preventable tragedies from my days working at the [LA Department of Health and Hospitals](#), which is forever engraved in my mind. I write and share with you today in an effort to raise awareness. Knowledge is power; educating the public is key in preventing these horrific incidents. I want to make sure this never happens to you or someone you love.

Backovers and Frontovers

It is appalling to think that one of the most horrendous, unimaginable accidents can happen in seconds within a few feet from the front door of your house. Sad but true: every year, thousands of children are killed or seriously injured because a driver backing up or moving forward (very slowly) didn't see them. These incidents referred to as "backovers" and "frontovers" primarily take place in a driveway or parking lot. The loss of a child is completely devastating, but to make matters worse, 70% of the time with backovers, they involve another family member behind the wheel of the vehicle.

A driveway is supposed to be a "safe" place we let our children play. It's where we find them drawing with sidewalk chalk, having fun with outdoor toys and where we teach them to ride their tricycles. However, driveways, no matter how safe you think yours is, in the blink of an eye can turn into a catastrophic event when vehicle meets child on impact.



The Statistics

According to the nonprofit organization, [KidsAndCars](#), these are the statistics related to backover incidents:

- EVERY week in the U.S. at least 50 children are being backed over by vehicles: 48 being treated in hospital emergency rooms and at least 2 that are fatally injured.
- One year olds (12-23 months) is the predominant age group of children in these back over incidents.
- More than 60% of backovers involve a larger vehicle (truck, van, SUV).
- 70% of backovers involve a parent or close relative as the driver behind the vehicle.



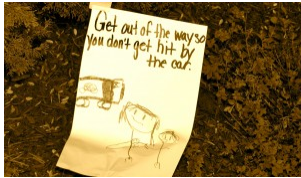
You may be astonished on how these incidents can possibly even occur, especially in one's own driveway. Can you ever remember as a kid a time when your parents ran over your toys laying around in the driveway? This occurred because ALL vehicles have blind spots/zones (the area you cannot see behind or in front of your vehicle from the driver's seat). Guess what? Over the years, vehicles have gotten bigger (larger, longer and higher off the ground), and typically the bigger the vehicle, the BIGGER the blind zone! I remember right after we

found out I was pregnant, my husband said, "time to get a SUV, in a crash, bigger always wins." Unfortunately, any vehicle (big or small) will be no match when it comes in contact with a toddler or small child.

Remember, backover incidents occur mostly to children 12-23 months. Toddlers at this age have learned how to walk alone and are impulsive and unpredictable. They lack judgment and understanding of dangers. Children, especially toddlers, do not think about personal safety and do not identify boundaries such as sidewalks, driveways or parking spaces. These incidences often occur because a child follows a parent out the door, dashing into the driveway and running behind the vehicle to get into the passenger side without the driver's knowledge. Hence the reason, backovers

are more commonly referred to as “bye bye syndrome” because children run to follow the parent outside just to wave goodbye or the children think they have been forgotten. The parent, completely unaware that their child has followed them into the driveway, unintentionally runs them over.

How can we prevent this tragedy?



So what can we do as parents to ensure this type of tragedy won't occur in our own driveways at home? Don't back blind! Always take a few extra seconds to carefully do a walk around your vehicle before you put your car in motion. It seems we are always in a rush, remember to use your mirrors, and ALWAYS back up slowly. When I am preparing to leave my home, I tell whomever is watching my kids inside the house that I am leaving and to make sure their eyes stay on the kids and do a head count of which children are to be left home for double security. Pay attention to your rear visibility cameras in your vehicle if equipped or have them installed for a little extra peace of mind. Most SUV's are now equipped with rear visibility cameras in models of 2010 and newer. There are many options available, check out [KidsAndCars](#) and click technology page for more information.

It is important to remember that ALL vehicles have blind zones. Therefore, backovers and frontovers can happen in ANY vehicle to ANY child in ANY driveway! Teach your children about what can happen in driveways and make it known they should NEVER play in or around any vehicle. [KidsAndCars](#) has been a lead organization for saving lives through education and public awareness campaigns as it relates to children left unattended in or around motor vehicles and a driving force in having laws passed to prevent these fatal events in an effort to save all children.

What are some things you do to keep your kids safe in your driveway?



About Janie

Janie is a wife and mother of two wonderful blessings, Cooper (2) and Camille (1). Cooper is an elite climber and Camille is a copycat of whatever her big brother does! Janie and her husband have been married for 11 years and live in the quaint little town of Madisonville. Her husband, Greg is a Fire Captain with the Slidell Fire Department. Janie is a graduate from Southeastern Louisiana University where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Health Promotion & Exercise Science and a Masters degree in Kinesiology & Health Studies. Upon graduation, Janie worked for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals in the Maternal and Child Health Program as the Program Coordinator for Childhood Injury Prevention, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and Child Death Review. She has been a National Child Passenger Safety Technician for 9 years and has a true passion for protecting our precious cargo! She now continues her work in the Health Promotion field as an Independent Distributor for AdvoCare, a world-class nutrition company specializing in health and wellness, weight management, vibrant energy and sports performance. A perfect day for Janie, begins with her SPARK energy drink, followed by morning kisses from her hubby and kiddos, and a picnic lunch with her family at the Tammany Trace/Kids Konnection playground in Mandeville. You can read more about Janie on her [AdvoCare site](#).

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