

4-year-old strikes, kills toddler sister with pickup in Collin County

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A 2-year-old girl was killed in northern Collin County on Sunday after her 4-year-old sibling hit the toddler with a pickup, authorities said.

The truck had been parked in a driveway in the 300 block of Westmoreland Circle in Westminster, a small community near Anna. The family was loading it with items to take to a relative's house, said John Norton, Collin County sheriff's office spokesman.

About 1 p.m., the children's father was inside retrieving items when the 4-year-old got in the truck and used the keys to start the engine. The child shifted into neutral and the pickup moved forward, striking the 2-year-old girl, who was killed instantly, Norton said.

Authorities said the father ran outside when he heard the truck start but could only watch as the pickup rolled forward, eventually coming to a stop against a neighbor's fence.

The toddler's name was not released Sunday.

Nationally, 5 percent of nontraffic child fatalities result from a child setting a vehicle in motion, according to KidsAndCars.org, a nonprofit dedicated to preventing child injuries and deaths from motor vehicles.

In recent years, though, these fatalities have become less common, said Janette Fennell, president and founder of KidsAndCars.org. That's because a law requires that all vehicles made in 2011 or after have a brake transmission shift interlock.

The interlock "makes it impossible for you to put your car into gear unless you have the foot on the brake," Fennell said.

The year, make and model of the pickup from the Westminster incident were unavailable Sunday.

The Collin County sheriff's office said an investigation is ongoing.

IN THE KNOW: Safety tips

- Always lock your vehicle, even in the driveway or garage.
- Never leave car keys within reach of children.
- Never leave children alone in or near a car.
- Know whether your vehicle has a brake transmission shift interlock system by checking to see if you can shift into gear without having your foot on the brake.

SOURCE: KidsAndCars.org

<http://www.dallasnews.com/news/community-news/mckinney/headlines/20130825-4-year-old-strikes-kills-toddler-sister-with-pickup-in-collin-county.ece>