

It was every parents' worst nightmare, a child's life snuffed out within minutes. It was Jan. 7 and Harvey Cain and daughter Mikayla had just returned home from Head Start where Mikayla attended school.

After a snack and a romp through the living room with the family cat, little Mikayla was ready for the daily afternoon nap she usually took with her Daddy.

Harvey left the 3 ½ year old for a restroom break, and returned to find her missing. Assuming she was hiding, he went searching for her.

He peered into the bedroom but couldn't see her.

He stepped out into the mudroom, and there he spotted her. Shock set in like a bolt of lightning, his daughter was hanging from the curtain cord in the window that separated her room from the mudroom.

"I couldn't see her because her body was behind the curtain," Harvey said, "I was only gone for seconds, and I never heard a sound."

Harvey raced back into Mikayla's room and found the cord wrapped around the child's neck. One foot was resting on the doll bed sitting under the window. The other foot dangled behind it against the wall. He freed Mikayla from the cord and carried her tiny body into the living room where he placed her on the floor and began CPR. She gasped, choked and vomited.

Harvey telephoned 911 and a short time later ambulance crews arrived. Mikayla was transported to Platte County Memorial Hospital, but died a short time later.

Gena Carney, a friend of the family who also works with Mikayla's mom, Brandy, at Head Start, still can't believe what happened.

"These are good parents", she said. "Not the kind who neglect their child".

"I never thought this could happen to Mikayla," Harvey said. "I was a very over-protective dad."

Could this accident have been prevented? Doubtful.

Parents baby proof homes and worry about dangers lurking for unsuspecting toddlers, but by the time a child reaches 3 ½, most feel the worst is over. What parent doesn't leave a three-year-old alone for a minute or two?

Harvey said he's not sure how Mikayla's neck got caught on the cord, but added she liked to slip things around her neck. What child doesn't?

Mikayla was also a climber, according to her mother.

"She was a very active child, full of life."

The Cain family doesn't want their daughter's tragic death to be in vain. Both Brandy and Harvey want to stress the importance of keeping cords "loop free" and out of reach of children.

"It just took a second", Harvey said.

Brandy's research on the Internet revealed that death by strangulation in toddlers is not uncommon in the United States.

Due to these tragic deaths, blind manufacturers are replacing cords in blinds made before 19.. with safety cords.

Today's manufactured blinds and curtains are geared toward the safety of the