

SCHOOL NURSE *Spotlight*

**Child Firearm Safety and the School
Nurse: Partners in Prevention**

December 3, 2024



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Objectives

- Identify 3 basic ways children get injured with firearms.
- Explore the safest way to store guns in the home in order to protect from injury/death.





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Dr. Kathy Monroe

Dr. Jennifer McCain

Pediatric Emergency Medicine



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Firearm Injuries in Pediatrics



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'Evil visited this community'

Mass Shootings are Headline-Making Events



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Mass shootings make up only

1%

of all gun violence in America.

2024 US Surgeon General's Health
Advisory on Firearm Violence

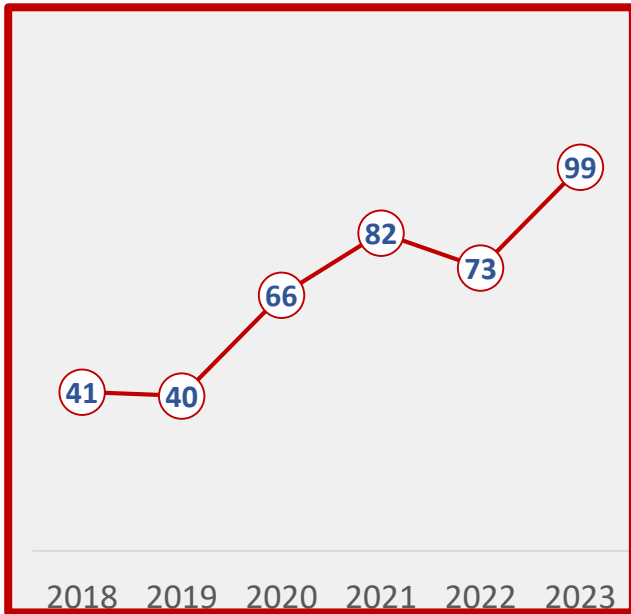
Mass Shootings are Headline-Making Events



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Children's of Alabama ED Firearm Related Visits



Children's of Alabama (COA) has seen a **36% increase** in firearm related visits including injuries and death over the last year

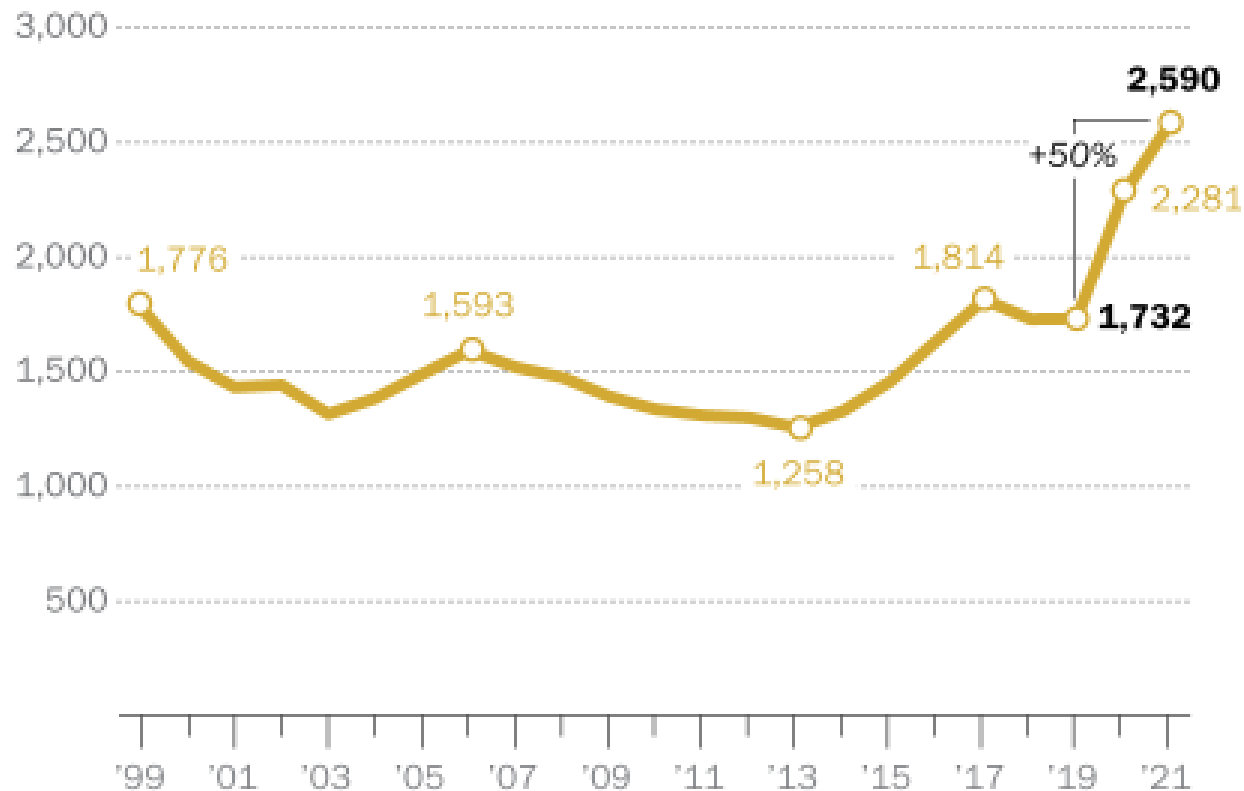
- Firearm injuries number one cause of death in children in US and in Alabama.
- Why and how are children being affected by firearms?



Nationwide

Gun deaths among U.S. kids increased 50% between 2019 and 2021

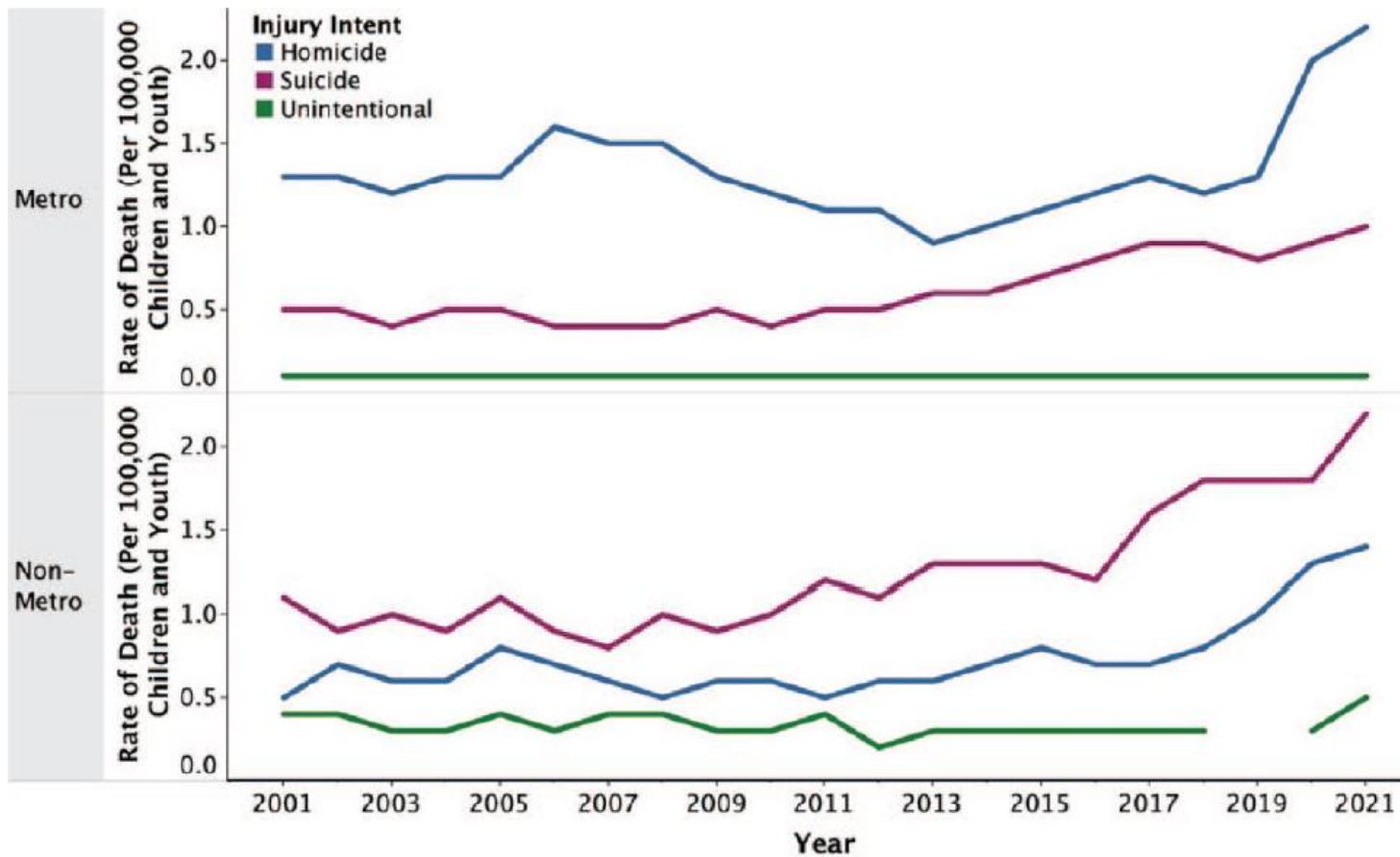
Gun deaths among U.S. children and teens under 18



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Types of Firearm Violence



Firearm-related deaths in children under 18 years old by intent and geographic location.



90%

90 percent of suicide attempts with a gun are fatal,
while 4 percent of those not involving a gun are fatal.

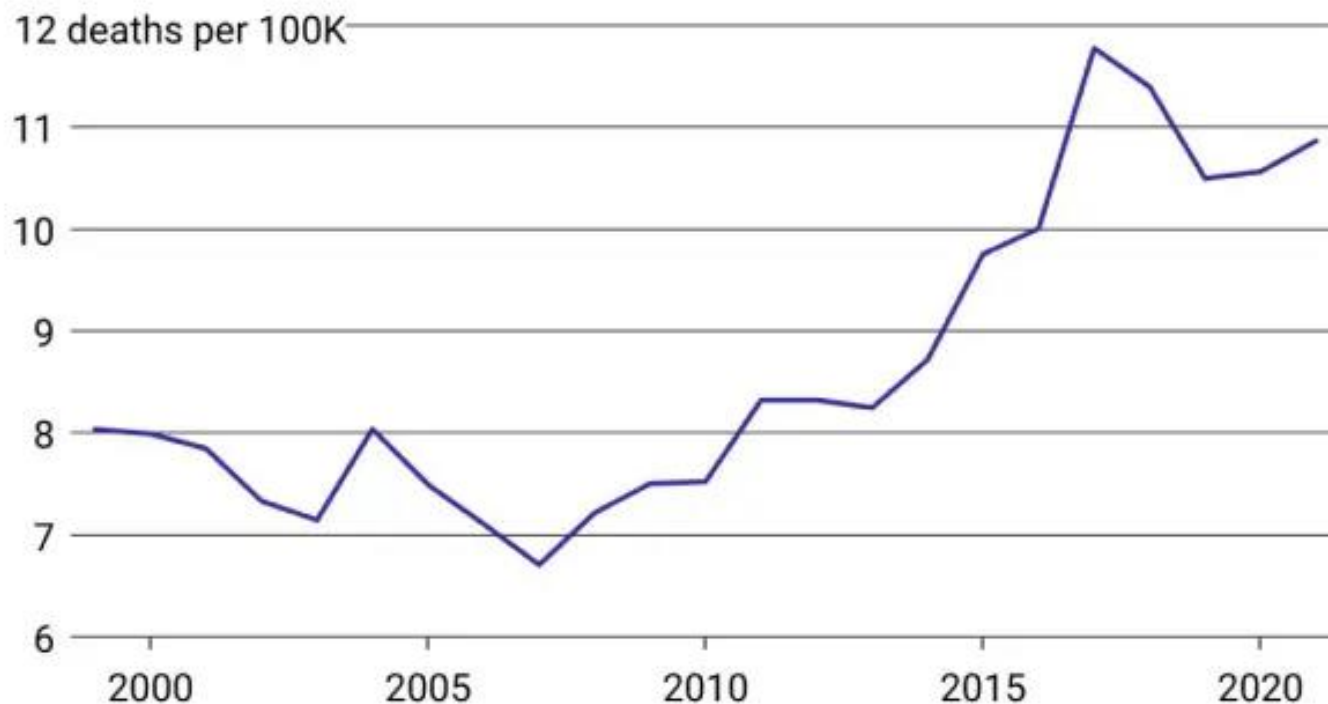


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Suicide - National

Rate of teen deaths from suicide is up 35% from 1999



Note: Based on deaths categorized as self-harm among people ages 15-19.

Data source: CDC



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Suicide and Firearms

Having firearms in the home increases the risk of dying by suicide by 10x!

80% of firearms used by children/teens in a suicide attempt belong to family members.

Firearms are used in 5% of suicide attempts.
*But are the cause of over 50% of suicides.



Community Firearm-Related Violence

NEWS

12-year-old boy shot in back while playing with friends outside Birmingham apartment

Updated: Mar. 22, 2024, 7:37 p.m. | Published: Mar. 2024, 4:28 p.m.



Pell City shooting injures 12-year-old boy Roland Thibado

[Visit >](#)



5-Year-Old Shot While Getting A Haircut In Alabama

[Visit >](#)



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Unintentional Injury by Firearm



“The mom was washing dishes just feet away and had turned her back for a minute. That’s when the toddler was able to sneak in and neighbors heard a gunshot” (Al.com).



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Children, Guns and Cars:

- Police say a 2-year-old was injured after an “accidental self-inflicted gunshot wound,” according to a statement.
 - Police told WALB news, that the toddler shot himself in the face as his parents were at a stand buying fireworks.
 - The child was inside a car at the time of the shooting.
- On February 29, **3-year-old** GP found a gun in minivan parked outside his home and [fatally shot himself](#) in the head.
 - On February 20, while helping mother clean the family’s SUV, a **3-year-old** boy [shot her](#) in the head with a 9mm handgun left on the front seat of the automobile.
 - On January 25, a **7-year-old boy** in a car with his three siblings died after 8-year-old brother [shot him in the head](#) with a loaded semi-automatic pistol found inside mother’s purse.
 - On January 4, **2-year-old** EW fatally [shot himself in the face](#) when he located a holstered .32-caliber handgun in a pocket on the driver’s side door of his grandfather’s truck.
 - The same day, a **9-year-old** boy [was shot](#) after he and his 8-year-old brother found a loaded gun in their family’s parked car. He was removed from life support six days later.
 - On October 18, a **2-year-old** boy grabbed his great aunt’s .357 revolver in a pouch behind the front passenger seat and [shot his grandmother](#).



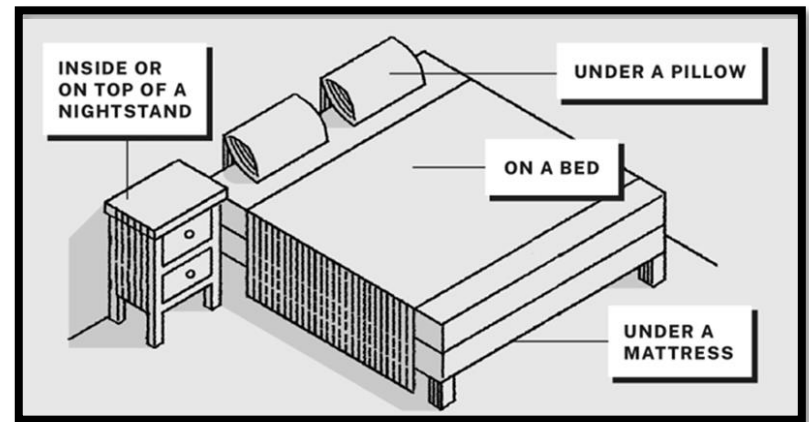
FACTS: Storage is Important!

- 85% of deaths in 0-12 year olds occur at HOME.
- 39% of deaths in 13-17 year olds occur at HOME.

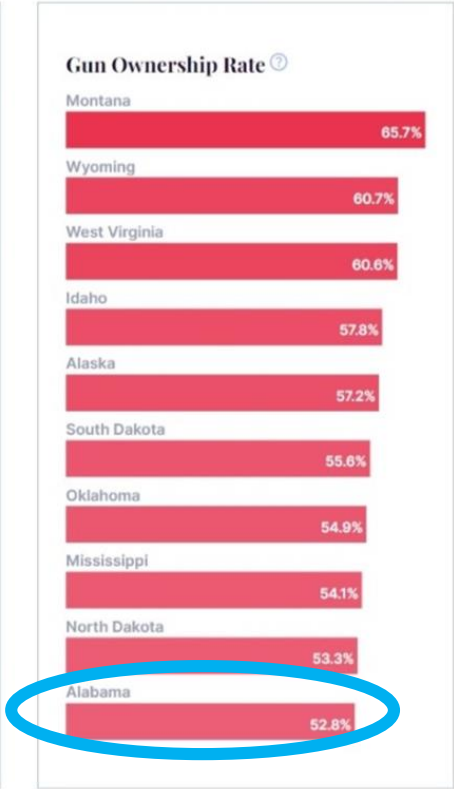
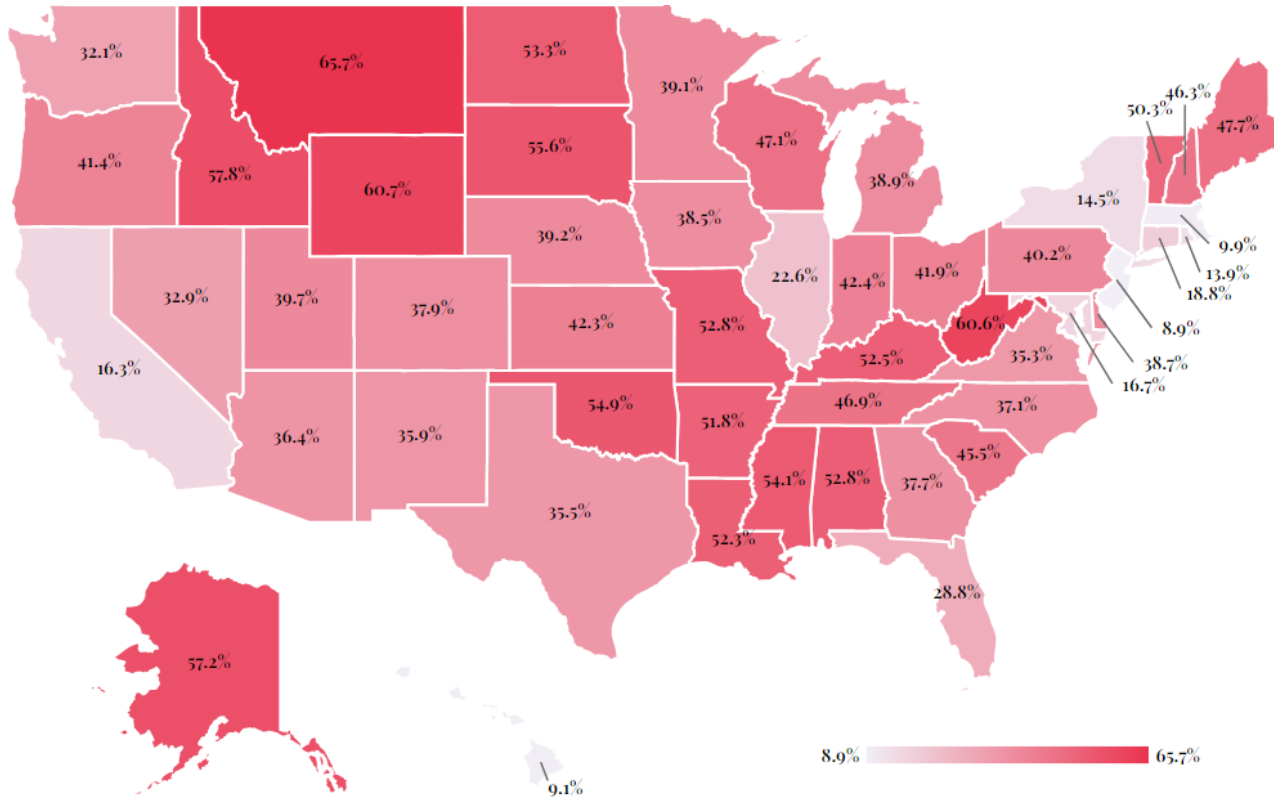
Storage is important!

- The overall increase in firearm-related deaths includes increases in suicide and homicide in 15-24 year olds.

Storage is important!



Firearm Ownership



39.8%
Gun Ownership Rate
National Average

62 per 100k
Registered Gun Rate
National Average

16 per 100k
Gun Death Rate
National Average



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Parents Perspectives on Safe Storage

Aitken, Minster, Mullins, Hirsch, Unni, Monroe, Miller.

- Study in southern Families
- 74% stored at least one firearm unlocked, with many loaded.
- Overall parental perception for risk of firearm injury in their children was low.
- Many parents believed verbal instruction sufficient.
- Parents requested education on safe storage with hands-on demonstration.



Kids Find Guns Even When Parents Think They Can't

- 70 % of parents reported that their child could not access a household firearm.

- 22% of these children indicated that they could access a firearm within 5 minutes

- 15% indicated that they could access a firearm in 5-60 minutes



Kids Handle Guns Without Parents' Knowledge

ARTICLE

Parental Misperceptions About Children and Firearms

Frances Baxley, MD, Matthew Miller, MD, ScD

Objective: To assess the accuracy of parental predictions about their children's self-reported behavior around household guns.

Design: Survey.

Setting: Family practice clinic in rural Alabama.

Participants: Convenience sample of parents and their children aged 5 to 14 years.

Intervention: Questionnaires about firearms administered separately to children and their parents.

Main Outcome Measures: Rates of concordance and discordance between parents and their children living in homes with guns about whether the children knew the storage location of household firearms and had ever handled firearms in the home.

Results: Of 420 parent-child dyads, 314 agreed to participate; 201 of the 314 homes contained guns. Chil-

dren younger than 10 years were as likely as older children to report knowing the storage location (73% vs 79%, respectively) and to report having handled a household gun (36% vs 36%, respectively). Thirty-nine percent of parents who reported that their children did not know the storage location of household guns and 22% of parents who reported that their children had never handled a household gun were contradicted by their children's reports. Such discordance between parent and child reports was unrelated to whether parents stored their firearms locked away or had ever discussed firearm safety with their children.

Conclusions: Many parents who were living in homes with firearms and who reported that their children had never handled firearms in their homes were contradicted by their children's self-reports. Parents who locked their guns away and discussed gun safety with their children were as likely to be contradicted as parents who did not take such safety measures.

Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2006;160:542-547

IN THE UNITED STATES, FIREARM injury accounts for 10% of all deaths among children aged 5 to 14 years, surpassed only by malignant neoplasms and motor vehicle crashes.¹ For every firearm-related child death in this age group, 3 children are injured by nonfatal gunshots,² and 25% of those children have permanent physical sequelae.³ Many of these injuries occur when a child gains access to household firearms that are stored loaded and/or in unlocked locations.^{4,5}

Several medical associations advise parents who decide to keep firearms in the home to store all of the household guns locked away and to separate ammunition from the guns.^{6,13} Despite these recommendations, firearms are as likely to be present in US homes with children as in homes without children, and they are often stored in unlocked locations and/or loaded.¹⁰

To our knowledge, our study is the first to examine how well parents' percep-

tions about their children's access to household guns coincide with their children's self-reports. We surveyed parents of children (aged 5-14 years) attending pediatric and family practice clinic in Alabama to assess how accurately parents could predict whether their children reported knowing where household firearms were stored and reported ever handling firearms in their homes.

METHODS

During the summer of 2002, research assistants in a pediatric ambulatory and family practice clinic located in rural Alabama approached all of the parents of children aged 5 to 14 years who were attending well-child or sick appointments and asked them to participate in this study. Parents and their children who agreed to participate were separated and given questionnaires about firearm ownership; neither heard the responses of the other. Parents completed questionnaires in the wait-

Of parents reporting that their kids didn't know the storage location of household guns, **39%** of their kids did know the location.

Of parents reporting that their kids had never handled a household gun, **22%** of their kids had handled one of these guns.

Author Affiliations: Department of Family and Community Medicine, San Francisco General Hospital, San Francisco, Calif (Dr Baxley); and Department of Health Policy and Management, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, Mass (Dr Miller).

REPRINTED) ARCH PEDIATR ADOLESC MED/VOL 160, MAY 2006
542 WWW.ARCHPEDIATRICS.COM
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Does Teaching Gun Safety to Kids Work?



Eddie Eagle and the Wing Team have a lesson to teach you about gun safety.

If you see a gun Stop! Don't touch. Run away. Tell a grown-up.

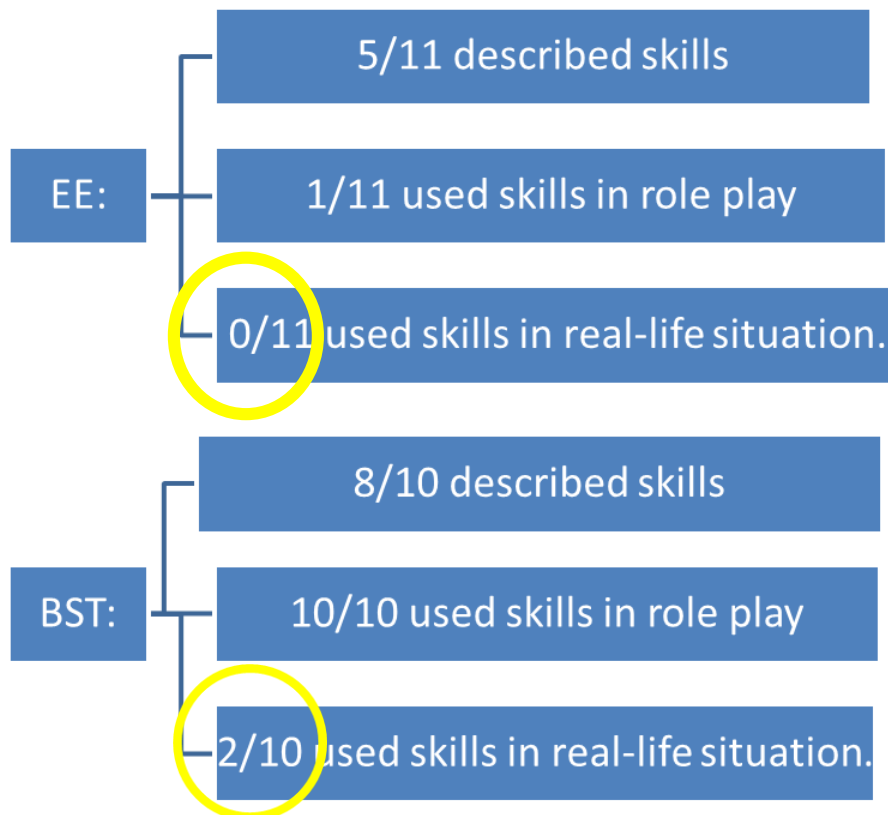


- Study designed to understand how well educational programs work.
- 4 - 5 yo kids trained with Eddie Eagle program OR a behavior skills training program.



Does Teaching Gun Safety to Kids Work?

**Not
Enough!**



Michael B. Himle, Raymond G. Miltenberger, Brian J. Gatheridge, Christopher A. Flessner; An Evaluation of Two Procedures for Training Skills to Prevent Gun Play in Children. *Pediatrics* January 2004; 113 (1): 70–77.
10.1542/peds.113.1.70



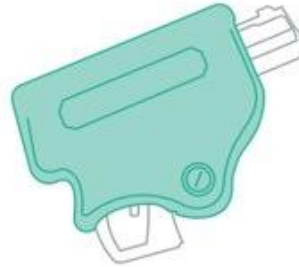
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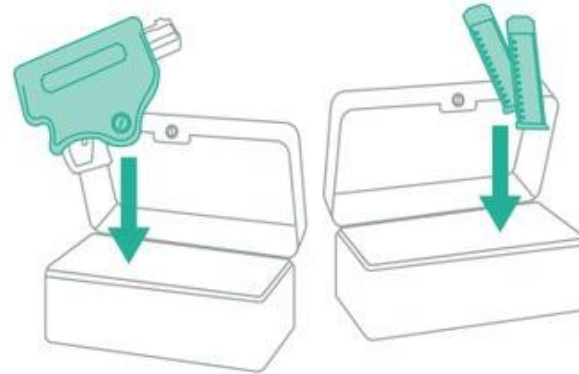
STORE GUNS LOCKED AND UNLOADED AND SEPARATE FROM AMMUNITION.



Unloaded



Locked



Separate

BeSMARTforKids.org

BE
SMART

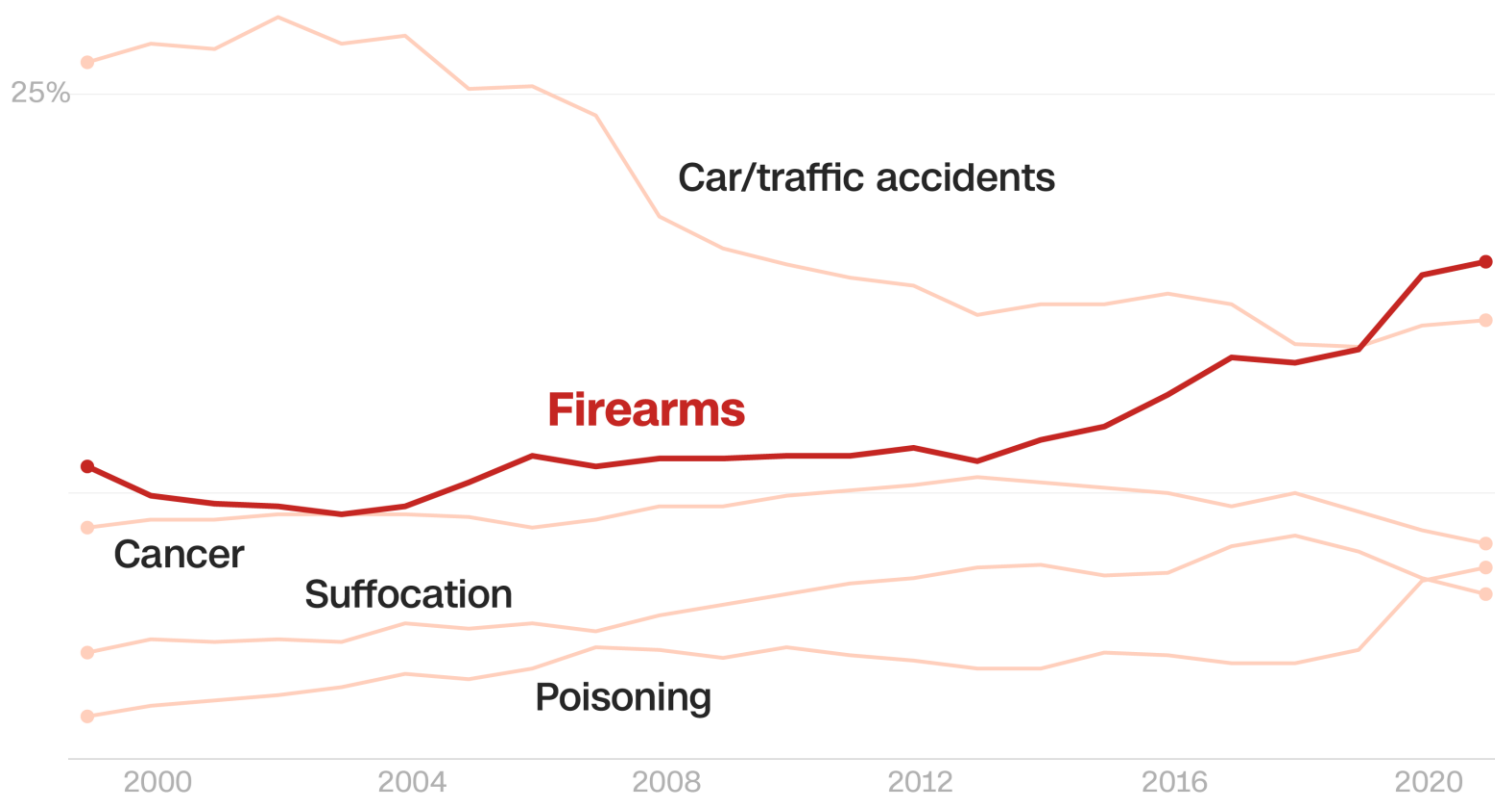


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Children are more likely to be killed by a gun than in a car accident

19% of all deaths for children 18 years and younger in 2021.

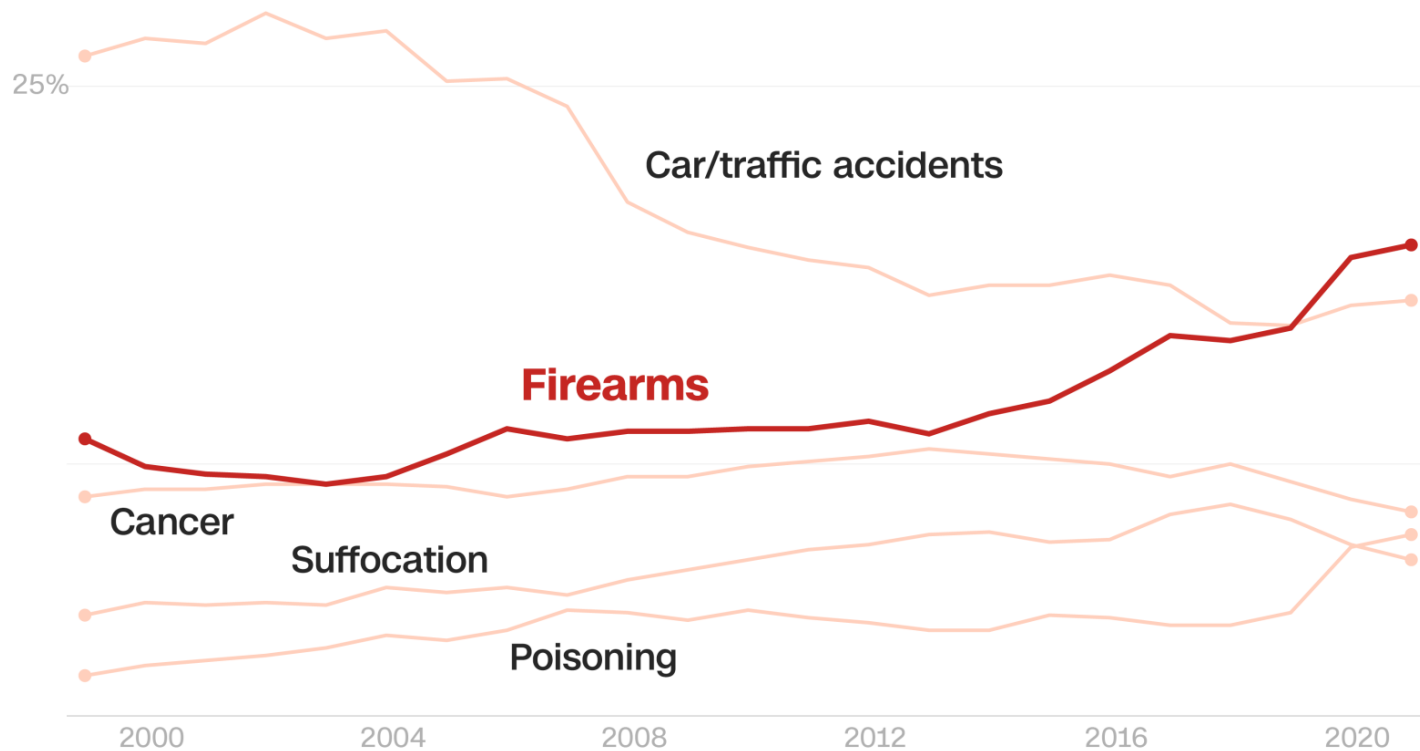




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What happened with MVCs?



The 6 E's of Injury Prevention

Education



Engineering



Enforcement



Equity



Economics



EMS



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Keep the “safe” in firearm safety

Hiding a gun is not enough! Kids are curious, and studies show they usually know where a family keeps a gun.

Gun safes can lower the risk a curious child will be hurt:



Safe or lockbox
for handguns



Locked gun
safe for rifles



Gun trigger locks—
inexpensive and effective



Lock box
for ammo



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Mental Health Risks

- Transfer firearms to others.
- Store at gun clubs or shooting ranges.
- Store at local law enforcement agency.



Children's of Alabama PODCAST: Firearm Safety

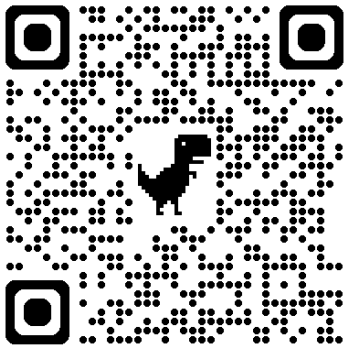
In 2023, the Children's Emergency Department saw 96 children with a gunshot wound (GSW) – 23 more than last year and more than double the number of children seen just five years ago (41). The drastic increase of patients seen with GSWs over the last five years created the need for Children's to form a firearm safety task force. The goal of this task force is to begin the discussion of the significance of safe firearm storage and its impact on decreasing injuries from unintentional GSWs. The latest episodes of the Inside Pediatrics and Red Wagon podcasts focus on Firearm Safety and the initiative Children's is taking to increase education and awareness around safe firearm storage.

In 2023
the ED treated
96
children with a
gunshot wound
(GSW)

New episodes can be found by clicking the Podcast link on the Red Wagon home page.



Listen to our Podcasts at
childrensal.org/childrens-alabama-podcasts



[Inside Pediatrics Podcast - Part 1 with Dr. Jennifer McCain](#)

[Inside Pediatrics Podcast - Part 2 with Dr. Erin Swanson](#)

[Red Wagon Podcast with Dr. Morissa Ladinsky](#)



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Secure Storage- How to Use Cable Locks

KidsHealth[®]
Educational Partner

**SECURE
FIREARM
STORAGE**



Children's
of Alabama[®]



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HOSPITAL-BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

HOSPITAL-BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS (HVIPS)

CAN HELP **BREAK THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE.**



To learn more, visit: www.thehavi.org

- www.Thehavi.org
- <https://Everytownresearch.org>

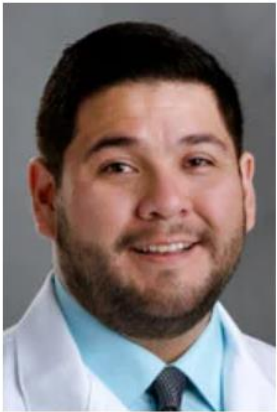


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Psychiatric Intake
Response Center (PIRC)
205.638.PIRC (7472)

PIRC



PIRC Directors:

Toby Martinez, MD

Cindy Jones, MA, LPC-S

PIRC Services

- Located in COA's ED.
- Free, confidential assistance from mental health clinicians trained to assess child/teen's mental, emotional, and behavioral needs and recommend best treatment options.
- Any adult with a mental health question / concern regarding a child/adolescent can call.
- Open 7 d/wk from 8 AM- 11 PM.
- Experiencing a crisis?
 - Call 911 or go to ER.
- Suicidal thoughts?
 - Call 988- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline #



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HERE FOR YOU



 Children's of Alabama **Connect** with someone who can help.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU.

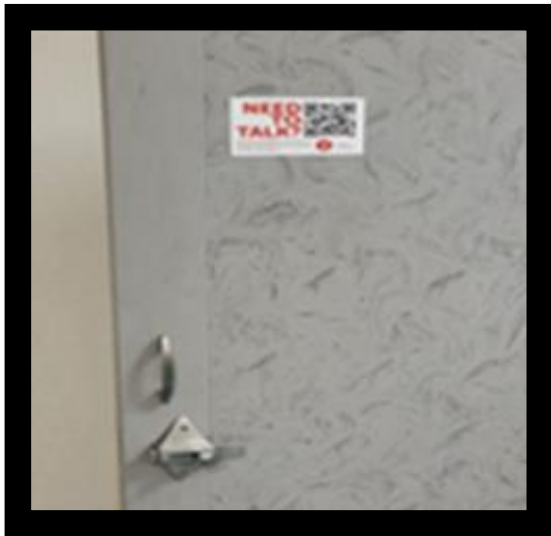


There are people and resources to help.
Click, text, or call.

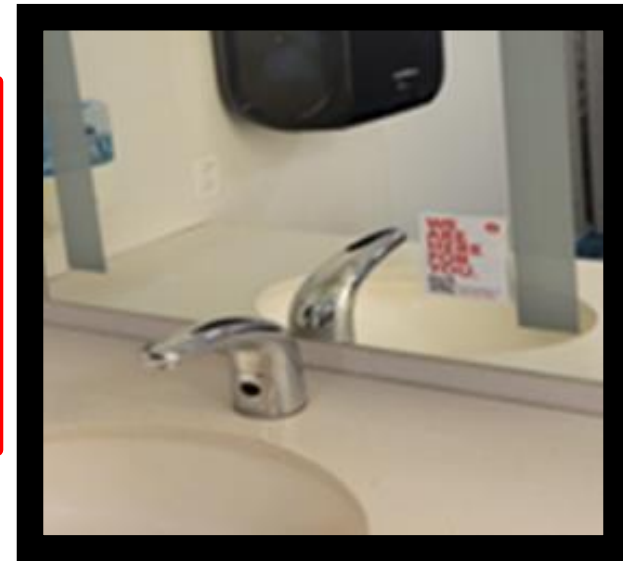
NEED TO TALK?



You are not alone. Click, text, or call and connect with real people on your own terms.

 Children's of Alabama

Available at No Cost!
Interested?
Reach out to:
Rachel.Skeen@childrensal.org
OR
Jamie.Smelcer@childrensal.org



How Can School Nurses Help?

Serving Alabama School Nurses for more than 50 Years

Improving health and educational outcomes of students

Improve the health and educational outcomes of students by strengthening the practices of the professional school



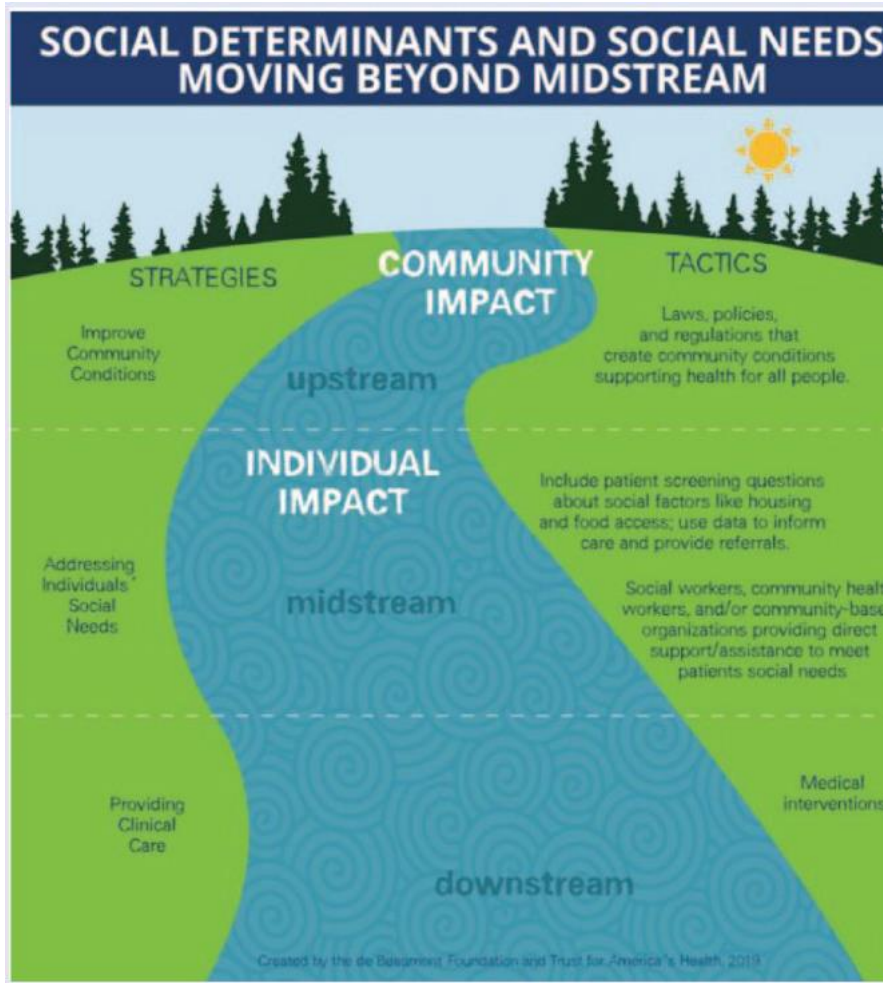
- School nurses are on the front lines!
- Closest to the impact of gun violence.
- Closest to the solutions of how to keep students safe.



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Framework for Prevention



Levels of Prevention:

- **Downstream:** Direct care and immediate interventions.
- **Midstream:** Addressing social needs and community education.
- **Upstream:** Legislative and policy changes to improve community health.



Downstream Interventions

- **Example:** Case study of Isabella, a student with PTSD after witnessing a shooting. Initially offered three potential community mental health supports. School Nurse learns the family lacks transportation to access the resources.
- **Actions:** Direct nursing care, relaxation techniques, referral to counseling and to school social worker to help with transportation/resources. Collaborates with student, family, counselors, teachers, admin for a multitiered support system.
- **Resources:**

American School Counselor Association. *Toolkits, Frameworks & Resources*. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Publications-Research/Publications/Toolkits-Frameworks-Resources>

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. *School Shooting Resources*. <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/terrorism-and-violence/school-shooting-reso>

Zero Suicide

- Counseling on Access to Lethal Means Training—Counseling on access to lethal means. <https://zerosuicide.edc.org/resources/trainings-courses/CALM-course>
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2019). What clinicians can do. <https://sprc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Handout-WhatCliniciansCanDo.pdf>



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**Help Students in Troubling Times
Resources**

**After a School Shooting
Resources**

Anti-Racism Resources

Back-to-School Resources

Career Development Resources

Crisis & Trauma Resources

FAFSA Resources

Natural Disaster Resources

Responding to Racial Violence

**School Counselor/Principal
Relationships**

Suicide Prevention and Response

Helping Students in Troubling Times

Here are some suggestions and resources to consider as you provide ongoing support to your students. Before you take any action, consult with your district to discover any guidance or response initiatives it has in place so your actions align with school and district programs.

- During an emotional period, it is important to remind students that their strong emotions will pass and therefore they must refrain from drastic or risky behaviors that could have long-term consequences. If they feel they've suffered an emotional loss, they must give themselves time to heal.
- Don't provide assurances you can't ensure. If students are fearful, don't tell them, "Everything will be okay." For some students, the dangers they fear are very real. However, you can help them find positive ways to address their fears.
- Help students process information or images they find inflammatory in print, television and social media. Very often, simply discussing current events can help students develop a better understanding, and expressing their emotions can help students deal with them more effectively.



Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event

- A traumatic experience may compromise the developmental tasks of school-age children.
- They may display sleep disturbances, which might include difficulty falling asleep, fear of sleeping alone, or frequent nightmares.
- They may complain of headaches and stomach aches without obvious cause, and some children engage in unusually reckless or aggressive behavior.
- Teachers often note that these children are having greater difficulties concentrating and learning at school.



Parent Guidelines for Helping Youth after the Recent Shooting

Common Reactions

- Feelings of anxiety, fear, and worry about the safety of self and others
- Fears that another shooting may occur
- Changes in behavior:
 - Increase in activity level
 - Decrease in concentration and attention
 - Increase in irritability and anger
 - Sadness, grief, and/or withdrawal
 - Radical changes in attitudes and expectations for the future
 - Increases or decreases in sleep and appetite
 - Engaging in harmful habits like drinking, using drugs, or doing things that are harmful to self or others
 - Lack of interest in usual activities, including how they spend time with friends
- Physical complaints (headaches, stomachaches, aches and pains)
- Changes in school and work-related habits and behavior with peers and family
- Staying focused on the shooting (talking repeatedly about it)
- Strong reactions to reminders of the shooting (seeing friends who were also present during shooting, media images, smoke, police, memorials)
- Increased sensitivity to sounds (loud noises, screaming)



CALM Training

Counseling on Access to Lethal Means

Course Description

Reducing access to lethal means, such as firearms and medication, can determine whether a person at risk for suicide lives or dies.

This course is about how to reduce access to the methods people use to kill themselves. It covers who needs lethal means counseling and how to work with people at risk for suicide—and their families—to reduce access.



Suicide Prevention Resource Center

What Clinicians Can Do

Following is a summary of the steps, goals, and things to consider when talking with clients about reducing access to lethal means.



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Midstream Interventions

- **Education:** Informing the school community about gun violence.
 - **Daily Statistics:** 12 children die and 32 are injured by gun violence daily.
 - **Home Risks:** 30 million children live in homes with firearms; 4.6 million with loaded and unlocked firearms.
 - **Witnessing Violence:** 3 million children witness gun violence annually.
- **Safety Measures:** Active shooter drills, trauma-informed approaches, and threat assessment teams.
- **Resources:** National Association of School Psychologists, SAMSHA, University of Maryland National Center for School Mental Health.



Upstream Interventions



- **Focus:** Safe firearm storage education.
- **Actions:** Presenting findings, advocating for school board resolutions, engaging students, and distributing safety locks.

Secure all guns in your home and vehicles	Model responsible behavior around guns	Ask about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes	Recognize the role of guns in suicide	Tell your peers to be SMART
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BE SMART

Additional Resources

My gun isn't locked up, but my kids don't know where it is. Why should I worry about them getting it?

You may think your kids don't know where your gun is located, but in fact, it's likely that they do.

Is it really my business to ask my neighbors/friends/family about out they store their guns?

Your kids' safety is your business. Every adult has a role in helping to keep all kids safe.

Secure Gun
Storage FAQs



Talking to Children
About Guns



Unload, Lock
and Separate



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[BeSMARTforKids.org](https://www.BeSMARTforKids.org)



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Resources



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **CALL 988**
Lifeline Chat: [SUICIDEPREVENTIONLIFELINE.ORG/CHAT](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat)

Crisis Text Line: **TEXT "TALK" TO 741741**
Emergency Response: **CALL 911**


PROJECT CHILDSAFE CHILD'S PLEDGE

I Hereby Promise:



- I will not handle guns without permission from a grown-up that I know.
- I will never play with guns.
- I will not go snooping or allow my friends to go snooping for guns in the house.
- If I find a gun, even if it looks like a toy, I will not touch it; I will tell a grown-up I know right away.
- I will obey the rules of safe gun handling.

My Signature _____

Parent's/Guardians Signature _____ Date _____

For more information on child safety and responsible ownership visit projectchildsafesafe.org.

Project ChildSafe is a program of the National Shooting Sports Foundation®



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Teach Families to Ask About Firearms in Other Homes

Asking Saves Kids

Before dropping your child off at a new friend's house, ask about firearm storage in the home.

"IS THERE AN UNLOCKED GUN WHERE MY CHILD PLAYS?"

ASK
ASKINGSAVESKIDS★



In the United States, 4.6 million children live in homes with access to an unlocked or unsupervised firearm. Every year thousands of kids are injured or killed as a result. Ask family, friends, and members of your community about unlocked or loaded guns in the home to prevent family fire. **ASK (Asking Saves Kids)** is a simple way to help keep kids safe and a fundamental part of our [End Family Fire](#) program.



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Resources



Greater Good in Education
SCIENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR KINDER, HAPPIER SCHOOLS

Kindness and Compassion for Students



WHOLEHearted
SCHOOL COUNSELING

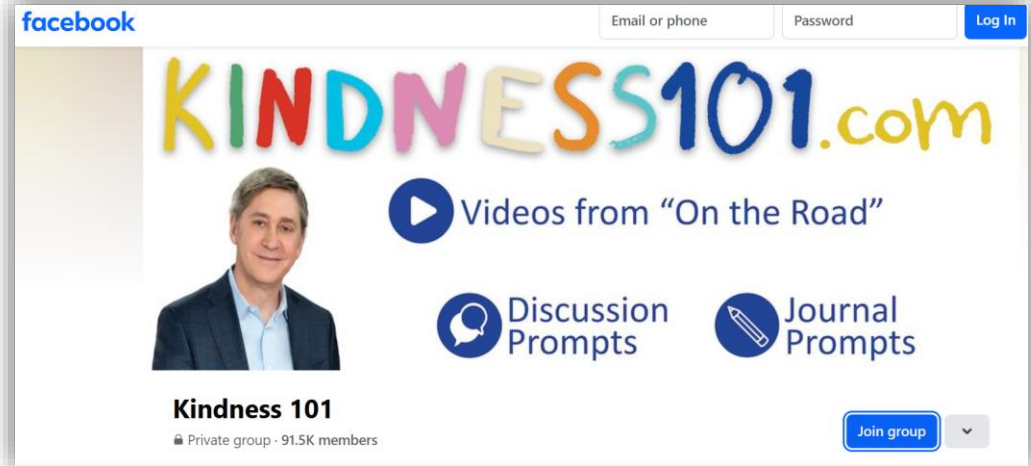
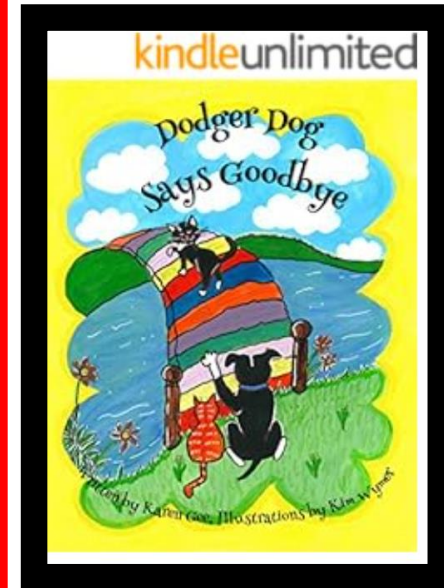
TELLING THE TRUTH AND BEING HONEST

 TIPS FOR KIDS

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK
Make sure your words are true, intentional, and necessary.

BE CLEAR AND HONEST
Say what you really mean to avoid confusion. 


 **BE PRECISE**
Clearly express what you think and feel.





facebook

Email or phone Password Log In

KINDNESS101.com

 Videos from "On the Road"

 Discussion Prompts  Journal Prompts

Kindness 101
Private group · 91.5K members

Join group



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Introduction

A Detailed Picture of Gun Violence in America's Schools

Four Key Facts about School Gun Violence

Solutions to Prevent School Gun Violence

Practices That Can Harm and Traumatize Students

Conclusion

REPORT

How To Stop Shootings and Gun Violence in Schools

A Plan to Keep Students Safe



What Can You Do?

- Commit to one of these In the next semester at your school:



- Identify possible gun lock resources for students in your area.
- Make faculty/staff aware of COA's PIRC and mental health resources.
- Introduce the concept of secure firearm storage to parents.
 - PTO/PTA
 - Mass messaging to parents.



Conclusions

- School Nurses are frontline responders and advocates for safe school environments (and safe communities!).
- Children and youth thrive in an environment where they feel connectedness and belonging. School Nurses can help transform school culture to ensure students feel this at multiple levels.
- Encourage a Public Health approach to firearm-related violence:
 - Emphasize increased awareness of, access to, and adoption of secure firearm storage through education, policy, and community engagement.





SCHOOL NURSE *Spotlight*

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