

PROTECT CHILDREN NOT GUNS 2019

DEAR LORD
BE GOOD TO ME
THE SEA IS SO
WIDE AND
MY BOAT IS
SO SMALL



**children's
defense fund**
Leave No Child Behind®

Mission Statement

The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

For over 40 years, CDF has provided a strong, effective and independent voice for *all* the children of America who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble or suffer family breakdown.



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Introduction

On April 20, 1999, Americans witnessed a once unthinkable and now unforgettable tragedy at Columbine High School. We watched in horror as frightened children fled with their hands up, frantic parents tried to reunite with their children, and traumatized survivors told reporters about the violence they witnessed. It was the first time many of us saw these terrifying scenes. But it was far from the last.

Since Columbine, an entire generation of children has suffered these sudden and terrifying acts of violence with ever-increasing frequency. Virginia Tech in 2007. Sandy Hook in 2012. Parkland in 2018. And most recently, two mass shootings in El Paso, TX and Dayton, OH within a span of 24 hours. Twenty years later, mass shootings have become the new normal.

Yet mass shootings reflect just a fraction of the gun violence saturating our children's lives. Everyday gun violence romps through their playgrounds, terrorizes them in their classrooms and child care centers, follows them down the street, waits at the bus stop, and shoots them through their bedroom windows. It nags at their minds and spirits, snuffing out the promise and joy of childhood. It gives them recurring nightmares and endless worries. It makes them plan their own funerals because they don't think they'll live to adulthood. And it makes them wonder if adults will ever make it stop and keep them safe.

The Children's Defense Fund has documented the devastating toll of gun violence on children for more than two decades. This new installment of *Protect Children, Not Guns* reveals our gun violence epidemic is growing larger and more deadly. According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 3,410 children and teens were killed with guns in 2017—the greatest number since 1998. Another 18,201 children and teens were injured by gunfire that year. And countless more children suffered the loss of a family member or a friend to gun violence; hid in the bathtub for cover from a drive-by shooting; worried about walking to and from school; or didn't play outside for fear of being struck by a random bullet.

This escalating violence against children and teens is no coincidence. It is a direct result of our nation's continued failure to value children's lives more than guns, gun manufacturers and the NRA. For far too long, Congress has turned a blind eye and wallowed in inaction while our gun violence epidemic has worsened. In the two decades since Columbine, Congress has placed no new restrictions on guns even as the federal ban on assault rifles expired, public support for gun violence prevention swelled and child gun deaths rose. As each day, week, month and year goes by, more children die and too little changes.

When will we come to our senses? When will we end the relentless violence and carnage that has come to characterize childhood in America? How many more senseless and preventable deaths will it take before our policymakers take meaningful action to keep children safe where they live and learn?

Children are tired of waiting and begging adults to protect them. Woven throughout this report are the voices of real children whose cries should be an urgent call to action for all of us. Their words tell us how the sounds of gunfire—and the terror of dying in a senseless act of violence—have become a normal part of growing up in America. Is this the country we want to be? Are we willing to let our children’s lives be defined by fear?

Enough is enough. It’s way past time to turn “thoughts and prayers” into action. Congress must listen to the majority of Americans who want common-sense, effective gun violence prevention measures enacted *now*. And all of us must stand up, speak out and organize until our leaders treat gun violence as the urgent public health crisis that it is and take immediate steps to save the lives of thousands of children. We cannot allow these shots to go unheard. Our children deserve better. Our children deserve to live.





**The number of children
and teens killed with
guns in one year would
fill 170 classrooms of
20 students each.**

**How many must die
before Congress will act?**

Overview

Protect Children, Not Guns 2019 analyzes the latest fatal and nonfatal gun injury data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for children and teens ages 0-19. The data reveal a terrible truth: America's gun violence epidemic is killing more children, more often.

- 3,410 children and teens were killed with guns in 2017—the greatest number of child and teen gun deaths since 1998.
- 21,611 children and teens were killed or injured with a gun in 2017—one every 24 minutes.
- Gun violence was the second leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1-19 and the leading cause among Black children and teens.
- Gun violence killed more children and teens than cancer, pneumonia, influenza, asthma, HIV/AIDS and opioids combined.
- Homicide is the leading cause of gun death among children and teens and assault the leading cause of gun injury.
- Black, Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native children and teens are disproportionately likely to be killed or injured with guns.
- Guns killed twice as many preschoolers as law enforcement officers in the line of duty. 93 children under 5 were killed with guns in 2017, compared with 42 law enforcement officers in the line of duty.
- Children were not safe in any state. Every state lost children and teens to gun violence between 2008 and 2017, ranging from 18 in Hawaii to 2,977 in California. The deadliest states were Alaska and Louisiana, with about 8 gun deaths per 100,000 children and teens annually—more than twice the national rate.
- Since 1963, 4 times more children and teens have been killed with guns on American soil than U.S. soldiers killed in action in wars abroad.
- U.S. children and teens are 15 times more likely to die from gunfire than their peers in 31 other high-income countries combined.



**Guns end the lives of
9 children and teens
every day in America.**

Nine every day.

Select Shootings Involving Children in the Past 12 Months

Every day, child lives are ended or forever changed by gun violence we have the power—but not the decency or courage—to prevent. What will it take for our leaders and citizens to say enough is enough and pass common sense gun laws to protect our children?

- **Midland-Odessa, TX • August 31, 2019** – A 36-year-old man went on a shooting spree across West Texas with a military-style assault rifle after a routine traffic stop, killing 7 people and injuring 25 others. Among the victims was 15-year-old Leilah Hernandez, who was killed shopping for a truck with her family—just months after celebrating her quinceañera. The youngest victim, 17-month-old Anderson Davis, was injured after being shot in the face while she and her twin brother sat in their car seats.¹
- **St. Louis, MO • August 23, 2019** – Eight-year-old Jurnee Thompson was fatally shot after attending a high school football jamboree with her cousins. Within just two days, two more children—ages 10 and 15—were shot and killed. Over the summer, more than a dozen children and teens were killed by gunfire in St. Louis.²
- **El Paso, TX • August 3, 2019** – Twenty-two people, including 15-year-old Javier Amir Rodriguez, were killed at a Walmart while back-to-school shopping and fundraising for a local little league team. Dozens of others were injured, including 2-month-old Paul Anchondo who also lost both of his parents in the shooting spree.³
- **Gilroy, CA • July 29, 2019** – A 19-year-old shooter with an AR-15 assault rifle took the lives of one adult and two children—ages 6 and 13—at the Gilroy Garlic Festival. Thirteen others were injured.⁴
- **Milwaukee, WI • July 13, 2019** – Three-year-old Brooklyn Harris was fatally shot while riding in the backseat of her mother’s car after a nearby driver opened fire.⁵
- **Memphis, TN • June 24, 2019** – A 3-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed his 4-year-old brother Ayden after finding an unsecured gun in a dresser drawer.⁶
- **Greenville, SC • June 20, 2019** – Two-year-old Kayden Stuber accidentally killed himself after finding a pistol in his grandmother’s purse. His grandmother had just returned home from running errands and left her purse on the bed.⁷ She only stepped away for a moment, but that was all it took for the curious toddler to find the gun and pull the trigger.
- **Richmond, VA • May 26, 2019** – A group of men randomly fired shots into a crowd at a community cookout, killing 9-year-old Markiya Simone Dickson while she was on a pony ride. She was set to sing in an upcoming talent show.⁸
- **Highland Ranch, CO • May 7, 2019** – 18-year-old Kendrick Castillo was fatally shot while trying to stop a gunman and protect his peers at STEM School Highlands Ranch. He was three days away from completing his senior year.⁹
- **Cleveland, OH • April 20, 2019** – After finding a gun at home, a 10-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed his 1-year-old cousin 1-year-old cousin Isaiah Martin¹⁰.

- **Buffalo, NY • April 6, 2019** – A 12-year-old boy was sitting inside his apartment when a stray bullet broke through his window and struck him in the head.¹¹ He was rushed to the hospital, but died shortly after.
- **Concordia, KS • March 30, 2019** – Just days after his 14th birthday, 8th grader Mason Berk accidentally shot and killed himself while shooting targets. He had been a member of the trap shooting club at his school.¹²
- **Parkland, FL • March 22, 2019** – Struggling to cope with the trauma of surviving a mass shooting and the grief of losing her peers and teachers, 19-year-old Parkland survivor Sydney Aiello tragically took her own life with a gun. She had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and often worried about getting shot in her college classes.¹³
- **Pomona, CA • February 25, 2019** – 15-year-old Daniel Mason was gunned down after riding a scooter outside his apartment. He had just moved to Pomona a few weeks earlier.¹⁴
- **Philadelphia, PA • February 17, 2019** – An hour after attending a vigil for his 17-year-old friend killed by gunfire two days earlier, 18-year-old Raysonna Williams was fatally shot in the same neighborhood. A few hours later, another teen—a 16-year-old girl—was shot and injured during a house party.¹⁵
- **Detroit, MI • January 24, 2019** – Three-year-old Christian Miller was shot and killed in a drive-by shooting. He was on his way to see Sesame Street Live.¹⁶
- **Louisville, KY • January 7, 2019** – Eighteen-year-old Richard Harper Jr. was killed by gunfire on his way to school. He was looking forward to returning from the holiday break and showing off his new shoes.¹⁷
- **Mobile, AL • December 24, 2018** – Fifteen-year-old Jakory Smith was killed in his sleep after two gunmen fired shots into his bedroom window on Christmas Eve. His mother had already wrapped his presents and put them under the tree.¹⁸
- **Gallup, NM • December 8, 2018** – A 3-year-old boy accidentally shot his 8-month-old sister in their motel room. Their mother had been taking a shower at the time and did not realize a gun was within reach. The infant survived the accident, but she was left permanently deaf and partially paralyzed.¹⁹
- **Baltimore, MD • November 19, 2018** – Five-year-old Amy Hayes was shot outside her grandmother’s house while playing with a new doll she had received for her birthday—just 5 months after her 7-year-old sister Taylor was shot in the backseat of their father’s car. Amy survived her gunshot wounds; Taylor did not.²⁰
- **Las Vegas, NV • November 13, 2018** – Sixteen-year-old LaMadre Harris was shot several times outside a local strip mall where teens often hung out after school. His cousin and sister were standing next to him when he died. It was a fight over a girl.²¹
- **Columbia, TN • October 15, 2018** – A stay-at-home mom killed her four children with several guns before taking her own life. The children, ages 14 to 17, were found slain on their beds and the bathroom floor.²² Each suffered multiple gunshot wounds.

- **Kansas City, MO • October 9, 2018** – Eighteen-year-old Zyhame Jones was gunned down near the basketball court in a local park.²³ He was just four credits shy of graduating high school.
- **Livingston, LA • September 17, 2018** – A 2-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed himself after climbing onto a stool and grabbing a gun from the kitchen counter. He suffered a gunshot wound to the face and died shortly after.²⁴
- **Washington, DC • September 9, 2018** – Eighteen-year-old TaQuan Pinkney was shot and killed after buying a soda from the corner store just blocks from his house. He was shot in the back while trying to escape the crossfire of “neighborhood beef.” He spent most of his time at school, the gym or a local nonprofit to avoid danger in his neighborhood.²⁵
- **Burien, WA • August 14, 2018** – A 14-year-old boy died after his best friend accidentally shot him. The boys had been playing with a handgun in his room.²⁶
- **Chicago, IL • August 6, 2018** – Seventeen-year-old Jahnae Patterson was shot in the face and killed at a neighborhood block party. She dreamed of becoming a lawyer. Four other children, ages 11 to 17, were injured but survived.²⁷ Just a day before, 17-year-old Kenny Ivory was shot and killed while riding his bike a block from his home.²⁸





Guns killed more preschoolers than law enforcement officers in the line of duty.

Is this how America puts children first?

Child and Teen Gun Deaths

“We deserve to have a childhood.”

– 13-year-old boy, Pennsylvania

Day in and day out, children and teens are robbed of their childhoods, lives, and futures by gun violence. While mass shootings grab fleeting public and policymaker attention, routine gunfire snuffs out the lives of more American children and teens every week than the Parkland, Sandy Hook and Columbine massacres combined. Children in America are under assault—and more and more of them are paying with their lives.

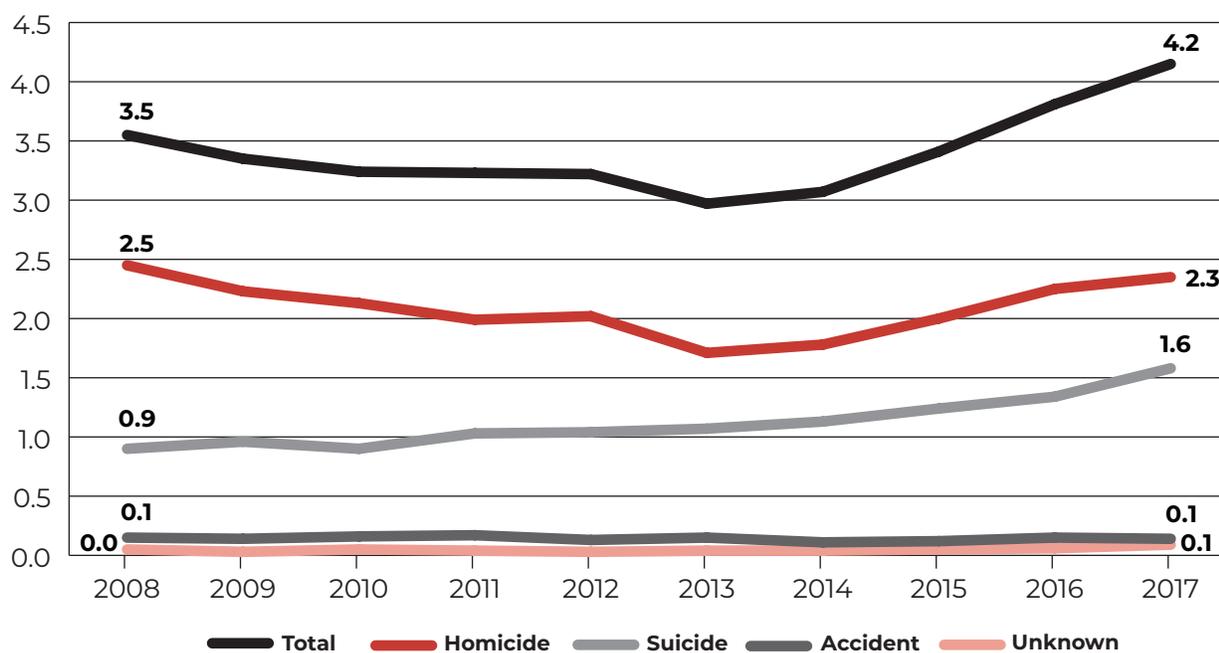
2017 marked the greatest number of child and teen gun deaths since 1998.

- 2014 reversed a seven-year trend of declining child and teen gun deaths. 2015, 2016 and 2017 continued that disturbing upward trend, with more deaths each year.
- 282 more children and teens were killed with guns in 2017 than in 2016.
- More children and teens were killed by gunfire in 2017 than in any other year since 1998.

3,410 children and teens were killed with guns in the United States in 2017.

- **1** child or teen died every 2 hours and 34 minutes.
- **9** children and teens died every day.
- **66** children and teens died every week.
- **284** children and teens died every month.

Child and Teen Gun Death Rates by Manner, 2008-2017



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.
Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Gun violence was the second leading cause of death for children and teens ages 1-19 and the leading cause of death for Black children and teens.

- Gun violence killed more children and teens in 2017 than cancer, pneumonia, influenza, asthma, HIV/AIDS and opioids combined.¹
- Only motor vehicle accidents killed more children and teens ages 1-19 than guns (3,970 versus 3,397).

Since 1963, 4 times more children and teens have been killed with guns on American soil than U.S. soldiers killed in action in wars abroad.

- Between 1963 and 2017, an estimated 186,239 children and teens were killed with guns on American soil, while 45,189 U.S. soldiers were killed in action in the Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq wars combined.²
- The number of children and teens who have lost their lives to gun violence since 1963 would fill 9,312 classrooms of 20 students each.
- The child and teen gun death rate in 2017 was 72 percent higher than in 1963 when data were first collected from all states.

The majority of child and teen gun deaths are homicides, while the majority of adult gun deaths are suicides.

- Of the 3,410 child and teen gun deaths in 2017, 1,927 were homicides, 1,296 were suicides, 115 were accidents, and 72 were deaths of undetermined intent.
- More than half of all child and teen gun deaths in 2017 were homicides (57 percent) and more than a third were suicides (38 percent). In contrast, two thirds of gun deaths among adults 20 and over were suicides (63 percent) and a third were homicides (35 percent).

How a Moving Testimony Became a Tragic Prophecy

“Sometimes, I sit back and I have to escape from what I see and hear every day.”

This was the opening line of **Sandra Parks'** award-winning essay on gun violence in Milwaukee.³ An aspiring writer, Sandra entered her school district's Martin Luther King Jr. essay contest in sixth grade. Her essay, “Our Truth,” offered a devastating account of growing up in a neighborhood and nation terrorized by guns. “We are in a state of chaos,” she wrote. “In the city in which I live, I hear and see examples of chaos almost every day. Little children are victims of senseless gun violence.”

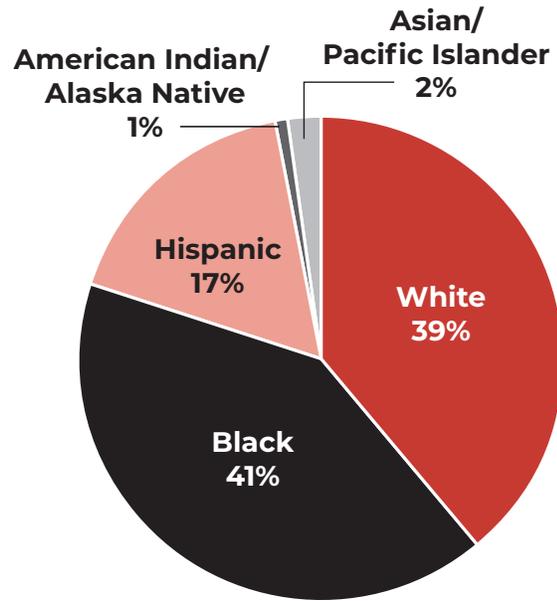
Just two years later, Sandra became a victim of the senseless gun violence she described in her essay. On November 19, 2018, Sandra was struck by a stray bullet while watching TV in her bedroom. She died at 13, with so much of her story left to write.



Gun violence affects children of all races, but Black and American Indian/Alaska Native children and teens face the greatest risk.

- In 2017, gun violence claimed the lives of 3,410 children and teens: 1,399 were Black, 1,331 were White, 581 were Hispanic, 52 were Asian or Pacific Islander, and 47 were American Indian or Alaska Native.⁴
- Although Black children and teens made up only 14 percent of all American children and teens in 2017, they accounted for 41 percent of child and teen gun deaths that year.
- Black children and teens had the highest gun death rate in 2017: 11.2 deaths per 100,000 Black children and teens. The gun death rate for Black children and teens was nearly four times the rate for White children and teens and more than 10 times the rate for Asian or Pacific Islander children and teens.
- American Indian/Alaska Native children and teens had the second highest gun death rate: 5.6 deaths per 100,000 American Indian/Alaska Native children and teens.
- Asian or Pacific Islander children and teens had the lowest gun death rates overall.

Child and Teen Gun Deaths by Race/Ethnicity, 2017



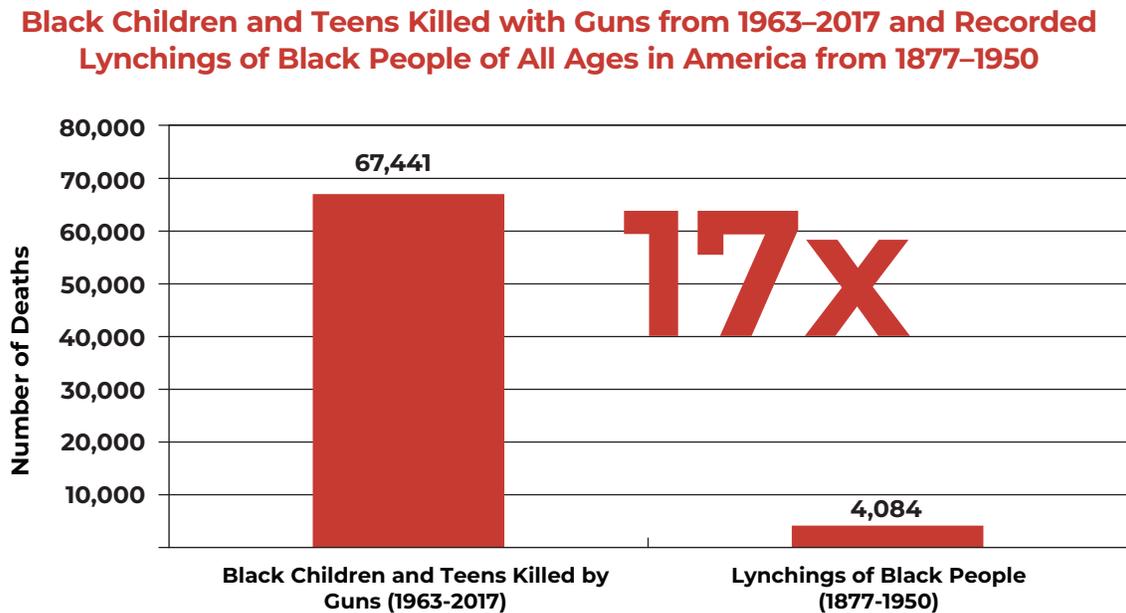
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

He Had \$3 in His Hand and His Whole Life Ahead of Him

Six-year-old **King Carter** was on his way to buy candy when he was shot and killed outside his apartment complex.⁵ He had just asked his father for a few dollars to visit the “the candy lady” downstairs. Minutes later, a stray bullet took his life. King dreamed of becoming a professional football player or an FBI agent. Instead, his loved ones and friends buried him in a tiny casket surrounded by football goalposts and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle action figures.



Between 1963 and 2017, 67,441 Black children and teens have been killed by guns—nearly 17 times the number of recorded lynchings of Black people of all ages in the 74 years from 1877 to 1950.⁶



Note: Gun death numbers exclude Hispanics from 1990-2017 and include a very small number of deaths from explosives from 1963-1978 (estimated to be fewer than 20 deaths).

Sources: Gun deaths: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Calculations by the Children’s Defense Fund; Lynchings: Equal Justice Initiative. 2017. *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror* (Third Edition). CDF previously used data from Tuskegee University for this statistic but EJI’s recent research incorporated that work and documented several hundred more lynchings through reviews of local newspapers, historical archives and court records as well as interviews with historians, survivors and victims’ descendants.

Black and Hispanic children and teens are more likely to be victims of violent gun homicides, whereas White, American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian children are more likely to take their own lives with guns.

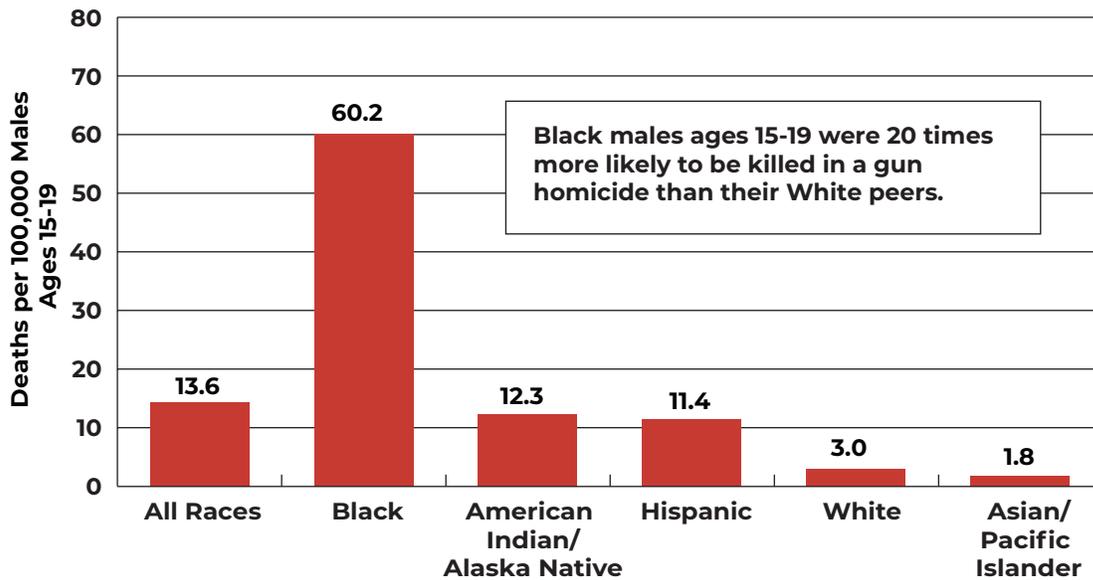
- The overwhelming majority of gun deaths among Black and Hispanic children and teens (86 and 66 percent, respectively) were homicides. The gun homicide rate for Black children and teens—9.6 per 100,000—was nearly 14 times that for their White peers.
- In contrast, the majority of gun deaths (69 percent) among White, American/Indian Alaska Native, and Asian children and teens were suicides.
- American Indian/Alaska Native children and teens had the highest gun suicide rate—3.4 per 100,000 American Indian/Alaska Native children. That’s nearly five times the rate for Asian or Pacific Islander children and teens and three times the rate for Black children and teens.

For more details about gun deaths by race/ethnicity and manner of death see Appendix Tables 1 and 2.

The majority of gun deaths occur among boys.

- Eighty-six percent of children and teens killed with guns in 2017 were boys (2,945).
- Boys were nearly 6 times more likely than girls to die in gun homicides and over 7 times more likely to die in gun suicides and accidents.

Homicide Gun Death Rates Among Males 15–19 by Race/Ethnicity, 2017



Note: Black, White, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander racial categories exclude children of Hispanic ethnicity. Rates for Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native teens are based on fewer than 20 deaths and may be unreliable.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Older teenagers face the greatest risk of dying from gun violence.

- More than 84 percent of child and teen gun deaths in 2017 occurred among 15- to 19-year-olds, compared with 10 percent among 10- to 14-year-olds and 6 percent among children under 10.
- Of the 2,880 gun deaths among 15- to 19-year-olds, 58 percent were homicides and 39 percent were suicides.
- Black teens, especially males, were most likely to be gun homicide victims. Black males between 15 and 19 were 20 times more likely to die in gun homicides than White males of the same age.

Infants and toddlers are not immune to gun violence. Guns kill twice as many preschoolers as law enforcement officers in the line of duty.

- 93 children under 5 were killed with guns in 2017, compared with 42 law enforcement officers killed by guns in the line of duty.⁷
- Sixty percent of gun deaths among children under 5 resulted from violent homicides. A third (34 percent) were accidents.

A Birthday That Never Came

On Thanksgiving night, 3-year-old **Malachi Barnes** was tragically shot in the back seat of his father's car.⁸ He died shortly after, just 28 days before his fourth birthday. Malachi's mother had already purchased invitations and decorations for his birthday party. He wanted Hot Wheels.

Gun Deaths in the States

Bullets know no boundaries. Children and teens die from guns all across the United States. Unsurprisingly, the largest states have the highest share of gun deaths. More than half of all 3,410 child and teen gun deaths in 2017 occurred in just 10 states: Texas (346), California (229), Illinois (213), Florida (204), Georgia (148), Ohio (136), Pennsylvania (135), Tennessee (129), Louisiana (121) and Missouri (113).

Data below reflect child and teen gun deaths over the 10-year period from 2008 to 2017 to account for smaller states with fewer deaths. Data for all 50 states are provided in Appendix Table 5.

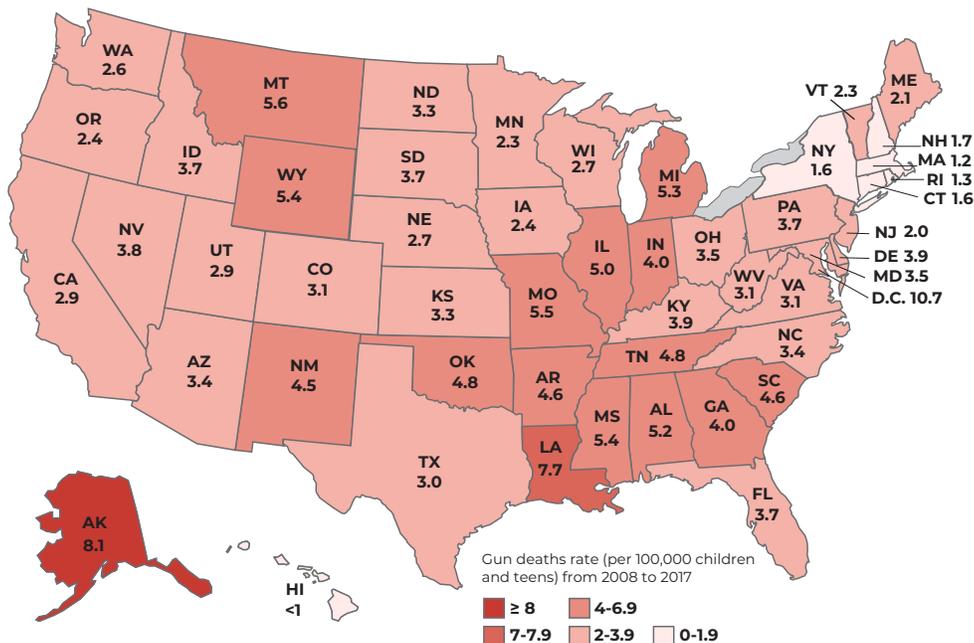
Every state lost children and teens to gun violence between 2008 and 2017.

- Between 2008 and 2017, a total of 28,072 children and teens were killed with guns across all 50 states.
- The number of deaths ranged from 18 in Hawaii to 2,977 in California.

The likelihood of children and teens dying from guns varied widely from state to state.

- The deadliest states were Alaska and Louisiana, with about 8 gun deaths per 100,000 children and teens annually—more than twice the average national rate over this period.
- While not a state, the District of Columbia had the highest child and teen gun death rate—10.7 gun deaths per 100,000 children and teens. Children and teens in the District of Columbia were 21 times more likely to die from gunfire than their peers in Hawaii, the safest state.

Average Annual Child and Teen Gun Death Rates by State, 2008–2017



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Underlying Cause of Death accessed through CDC WONDER.

Top 10 States with the Highest and Lowest Child and Teen Gun Death Rates

Average Annual Gun Deaths per 100,000 Children and Teens
(Total Number of Deaths) 2008–2017

Highest 10 States			Lowest 10 States		
Alaska	8.06	(166)	Hawaii	0.53*	(18)
Louisiana	7.66	(949)	Massachusetts	1.24	(199)
Montana	5.56	(140)	Rhode Island	1.26	(32)
Missouri	5.50	(864)	Connecticut	1.64	(146)
Wyoming	5.41	(82)	New York	1.64	(787)
Mississippi	5.26	(436)	New Hampshire	1.66	(52)
Alabama	5.17	(647)	New Jersey	1.97	(443)
Illinois	4.99	(1,690)	Maine	2.10	(63)
Oklahoma	4.84	(508)	Minnesota	2.31	(330)
Tennessee	4.81	(801)	Vermont	2.34	(34)

*Based on a small number of deaths so the rate is unreliable.

Highest 10 States for Homicides

Highest 10 States for Suicides

Average Annual Gun Homicides
per 100,000 Children and Teens
(Total Number of Deaths) 2008-2017

Average Annual Gun Suicides
per 100,000 Children and Teens
(Total Number of Deaths) 2008-2017

Louisiana	5.61	(695)	Alaska	4.85	(100)
Illinois	4.17	(1,412)	Wyoming	4.35	(66)
Missouri	3.50	(549)	Montana	4.13	(104)
Alabama	3.14	(393)	Idaho	2.90	(138)
Delaware	3.07	(71)	North Dakota	2.45	(45)
Mississippi	2.95	(244)	Oklahoma	2.22	(233)
Tennessee	2.94	(490)	South Dakota	2.21	(51)
Maryland	2.84	(429)	New Mexico	2.16	(122)
Georgia	2.57	(715)	Utah	2.04	(200)
Florida	2.53	(1,150)	Arkansas	1.96	(154)

Bolded states are also among top ten for highest overall gun death rates for children and teens.



**America's military
and law enforcement
agencies have 5.5 million
guns. Our citizens have
393 million.**

**Has this made our
children safer?**

Child and Teen Gun Injuries

“[I want] to not have to wake up and be scared to do normal things, like go to the movies because [someone] decided to shoot it up one night. Nowadays it’s scary to go anywhere because you never know what’s going to happen.”

– 16-year-old girl, New York

Gun deaths tell only part of the story when it comes to gun violence. Many more children and teens are injured than killed with guns each day in America. For every child or teen fatally shot in 2017, another 5 suffered non-fatal gunshot injuries.

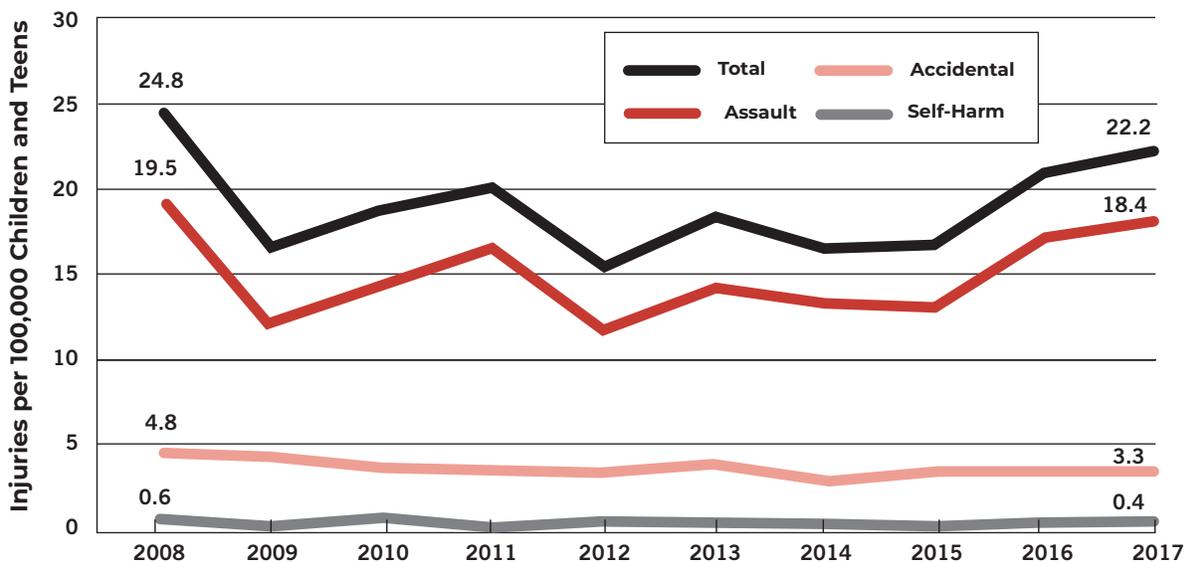
18,201 children and teens were injured by guns in 2017.¹

- 1 child or teen was injured with a gun every 29 minutes.
- 50 children and teens were injured every day.
- 350 children and teens were injured every week.
- 1,517 children and teens were injured every month.

The number of children and teens injured with guns increased 6 percent between 2016 and 2017.

- 1,046 more children and teens suffered non-fatal gun injuries in 2017 than 2016.

Rates of Gun Injury Among Children and Teens by Manner, 2008–2017



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Non Fatal Injury Reports. Accessed through the Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Based on data from the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). Represents estimates extrapolated from the number of gun injuries reported by a nationally representative sample of emergency rooms. Accidental and self-harm injury estimates are unstable due to small numbers.

The Costs of Gun Violence

Gun violence not only has enormous physical and emotional costs for victims and their families—it also has substantial economic costs for our entire nation. The 114,959 total gun deaths and injuries among children, teens and adults in 2012 cost our nation **\$229 billion**—an average of \$2 million for each individual shot.²

The direct costs of gun violence—including increased medical and mental health treatment, emergency services, and administrative and criminal justice expenses—totaled \$8.6 billion. Gun victims, their families and their employers lost an estimated \$49 billion in lost wages and productivity. The economic value of the pain, suffering and lost quality of life among individuals injured or killed with guns and families left behind was valued at an additional \$169 billion. This estimate does not count the larger toll and economic impact of gun violence on entire communities, including lower property values and lost tax revenue.

These are costs none of us can afford and none of us—especially our children—should be forced to pay.

The overwhelming majority of child and teen gun injuries results from assaults rather than accidents or self-harm.

- Eighty-three percent of all gun injuries among children and teens in 2017 were the result of assaults (15,141 injuries), 15 percent were accidental (2,696) and two percent were self-inflicted (364).³

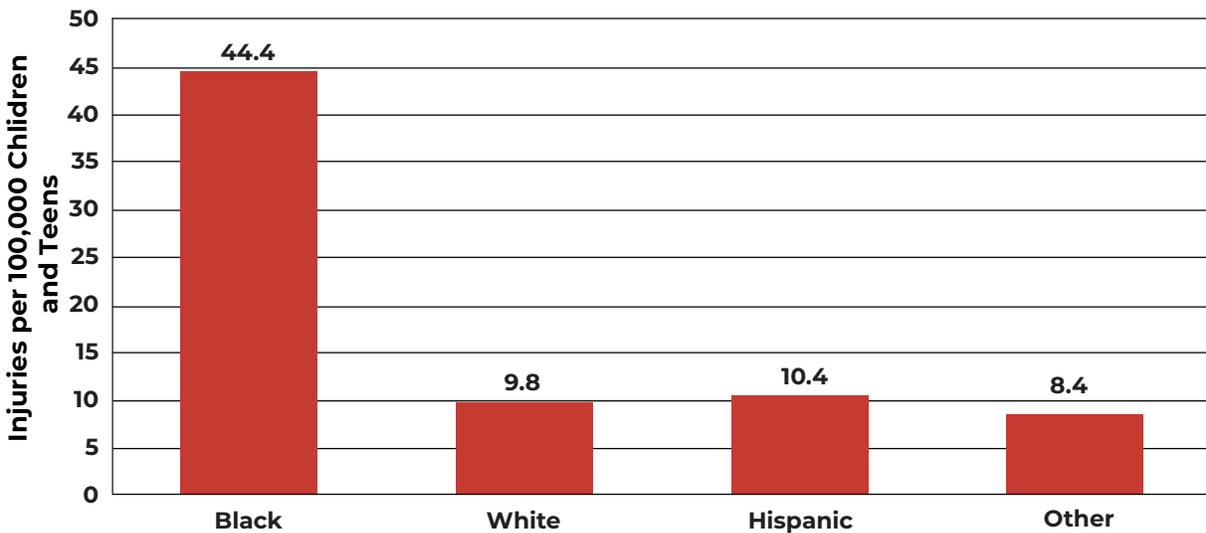
Older teens are most likely to be injured with a gun.

- In 2017, 9 in 10 gun injuries (91 percent) occurred among older teens ages 15-19.
- Eighty-seven percent of gun injuries among older teens resulted from assaults.

Children of color continue to be disproportionately injured by gunfire, with Black children and teens at greatest risk.

- In 2017, 6,096 Black, 4,272 White and 1,995 Hispanic children and teens were injured with guns.⁴
- Between 2016 and 2017, gun injury rates increased for White children, Hispanic children and children of other races.
- Black children and teens made up nearly half (48 percent) of the 12,835 gun injuries for which the victim's race or ethnicity was stated.
- Black children and teens were more than 4 times as likely to be injured with a gun as their White and Hispanic peers.

Rates of Gun Injuries Among Children and Teens by Race/Ethnicity, 2017



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Non-Fatal Injury Reports. Accessed through the Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Based on data from the Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). Represents estimates extrapolated from the number of gun injuries reported by a nationally representative sample of emergency rooms. Some estimates are unstable due to small numbers.

Invisible Wounds: The Psychological and Emotional Trauma of Gun Violence on Children

*"I will never forget that day. What I saw. What I did. What I experienced.
What happened to my classmates."*

- Aalayah Eastmond, 17-year-old from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School

When we count the victims of gun violence, far too often we do not include children who are harmed indirectly but often just as intensely. In addition to children and teens who have been killed or injured with guns, many more children in America have witnessed gun violence in their homes, schools or neighborhoods and suffered the deep pain and trauma that follows. The 2014 National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence found that more than two-thirds (67.5 percent) of children and youth had been victims or witnesses of violence within the past year. More than 1 in 10 youth ages 14-17 (13.4 percent) had witnessed a shooting at some point in their lives, and this number is thought to be even higher among low-income children.

Chronic exposure to gun violence takes an enormous toll on children. Whether they are victims or witnesses, children exposed to violence are at risk for major disruptions in their mental, emotional and physical development that can ultimately interfere with their health and well-being. These disruptions can include difficulty sleeping and eating, irritability, impulse control issues, attention and concentration problems, aggression, depression and withdrawal, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), failure in school and repeated victimization. When this trauma goes untreated, symptoms can persist into adulthood and place lifelong limitations on health, well-being, relationships and personal success.



American children and teens are 15 times more likely to die from gunfire than their peers in 31 other high-income countries combined.

Is this what we mean by American exceptionalism?

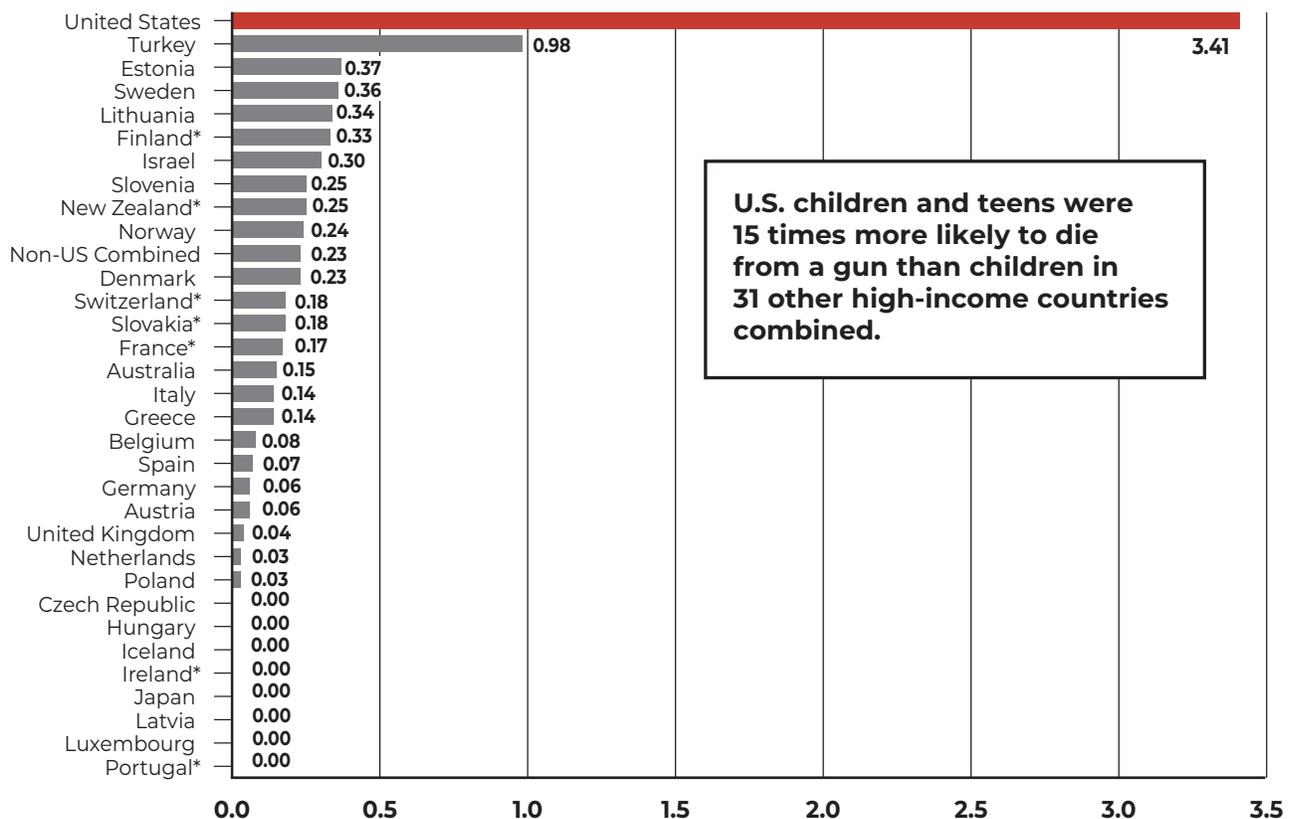
International Gun Death Comparisons

*“Pop, pop, bang, bang
Schools, communities,
houses too
Nobody’s safe, they’re
Coming for you”*

- 12-year-old boy, Washington, D.C.

The relentless slaughter of children and teens is a uniquely American phenomenon. To put gun deaths of children and teens in the U.S. in a global context, the Children’s Defense Fund collected recent data on gun deaths in other high-income countries.¹ Including the United States, data were available for 32 of the 36 member countries of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).² Our analysis reveals children and teens die from gunfire at a much higher rate in America than in all other high-income countries combined—a shameful distinction for the world’s wealthiest and most powerful nation.

Rates of Gun Deaths per 100,000 Children and Teens in High-Income Countries



U.S. children and teens were 15 times more likely to die from a gun than children in 31 other high-income countries combined.

* Chart includes 2015 data for all countries except Finland, Slovakia, France, and Portugal (2014) and New Zealand, Switzerland, and Ireland (2013).

Source: Children’s Defense Fund analysis of data from World Health Organization Mortality Database, Cause of Death Query Online (CoDQL). Copenhagen: World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe. Accessed August 13, 2019; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Accessed using the WONDER database. Rates are not age-adjusted.

U.S. children and teens are 15 times more likely to die from guns than their peers in 31 other high-income countries combined.

- Gun death rates for children and teens in the U.S. were more than 3 times higher than in Turkey, the country with the next highest rate; 11 times higher than in Israel; 19 times higher than in Switzerland; and 85 times higher than in the United Kingdom.
- Children and teens in the U.S. made up about 34 percent of all children and teens in these 32 countries but 88 percent of all child and teen gun deaths.
- Higher gun death rates in the U.S. were observed for all types of gun deaths (homicides, suicides and accidents) but were particularly pronounced for homicide deaths. U.S. children and teens were 33 times more likely to die from a gun homicide than their peers in these 31 high-income countries combined.
- Gun homicide rates among children ages 0-14 were 20 times higher in the U.S. compared with these other high-income countries.

The U.S. Leads Industrialized Nations in Gun Ownership and Gun Imports

- The United States is not only an outlier in child and teen gun deaths but also in gun ownership and imports. Americans account for less than 5 percent of the global population, yet own nearly half (46 percent) of all civilian guns in the world.³
- Between 2006 and 2017, American civilians acquired at least 122 million new or imported firearms.⁴
- In a 2017 survey of 230 countries, the United States had the highest number of civilian firearms—a staggering 393 million. India had the second highest number—71 million—less than a fifth of the U.S. arsenal.⁵
- The United States has more guns than people. Among 230 countries, the United States ranked first in the number of guns per capita with an average of 120.5 guns per 100 people—more than one gun per person. America’s civilian gun ownership rate is more than double that of the next highest nation—Yemen (52.8 firearms per 100 people). The United States and Yemen are the only countries with civilian firearm ownership rates exceeding 50 per 100 people.⁶

The Top Ten Countries by Civilian Gun Ownership Per 100 People, 2017

	Rank	Average Guns per 100 People
United States	1	120.5
Yemen	2	52.8
Montenegro	3	39.1
Serbia	4	39.1
Canada	5	34.7
Uruguay	6	34.7
Cyprus	7	34.0
Finland	8	32.4
Lebanon	9	31.9
Iceland	10	31.7

Source: Small Arms Survey 2018. Estimating Global Civilian-Held Firearms Numbers. Available at <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/file-admin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-BP-Civilian-Firearms-Numbers.pdf>.

The Truth About Guns in America

America's obsession with guns is fueled by myths and misconceptions—and this misinformation is no accident. For years, the gun lobby has actively distorted and blocked the truth. It's time to set the record straight.

1. A gun in the home is more likely to endanger loved ones than it is to protect them.

Having a gun in the home makes people and their loved ones *less* safe. The presence of a gun in the home makes the likelihood of homicide three times higher,¹ suicide three to five times higher,² and accidental death four times higher.³ For every time a gun in the home injures or kills in self-defense, there are 11 completed and attempted gun suicides, seven criminal assaults and homicides with a gun, and four unintentional shooting deaths or injuries.⁴

2. Many children live in homes with loaded, unlocked guns and know where they are kept.

A third of households with children have a gun and nearly half of gun-owning households with children do not store all firearms safely.⁵ An estimated 4.6 million children live in homes with at least one unlocked and loaded gun⁶—and most children know where these guns are kept. About 3 in 4 children ages 5-14 with gun-owning parents know where firearms are stored and more than 1 in 5 have handled a gun in the home without their parents' knowledge.⁷ Too often, this leads to preventable accidents and tragic suicides. More than half of youth who committed suicide with a gun obtained the gun from their home, usually a parent's gun.⁸

3. Guns make violence more deadly.

Contrary to what the gun lobby says, guns *do* kill people. Guns make killing easy and efficient, thereby increasing the odds an act of anger, hate or violence turns into a lethal tragedy.⁹ The use of a gun in family or intimate assaults increased the risk of death 12 times.¹⁰ An estimated 41 percent of gun-related homicides and 94 percent of gun-related suicides would not occur if no guns were present.¹¹

4. Armed school guards and teachers do not make children safer.

There is no evidence that armed guards or teachers in schools make children safer.¹² In fact, armed guards and teachers often introduce more risk into the classroom. A report from the Giffords Law Center found armed adults in schools frequently mishandled guns or allowed students to get their hands on guns.¹³ Moreover, the presence of armed guards and police officers on school grounds often leads to the criminalization of children at increasingly younger ages and pushes children—especially Black and Hispanic boys—into the prison pipeline.¹⁴

5. Mental health is not a major risk factor for gun violence.

Individuals with mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators. Less than 5 percent of gun-related killings in the United States were committed by people with mental illness between 2001 and 2010.¹⁵ In fact, research suggests it is access to guns—not mental illness—that makes individuals more likely to commit gun violence.¹⁶

6. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) can regulate teddy bears and toy guns, but not real guns.

A 1976 amendment to the Consumer Product Safety Act specifically states that the Commission “shall make no ruling or order that restricts the manufacture or sale of guns, guns ammunition, or components of guns ammunition, including black powder or gunpowder for guns.”¹⁷ This restriction remains in effect today. As a result, the CPSC can regulate teddy bears and toy guns¹⁸ but cannot regulate real guns—one of the most lethal consumer products.

7. The gun industry has been granted broad immunity from liability lawsuits, preventing consumers from holding negligent gun manufacturers and dealers accountable.

Unlike every other major industry in America, the gun industry has been shielded from accountability for irresponsible and negligent behavior. The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA)—passed by Congress in 2005 amidst pressure from the NRA—grants gun manufacturers and dealers broad immunity from federal and state liability lawsuits. The PLCAA makes it nearly impossible to hold the gun industry accountable, prohibiting individuals from filing lawsuits against gun manufacturers or dealers when their dangerous products cause harm or their irresponsible practices enable criminals to obtain guns.¹⁹ No other industry enjoys such blanket immunity. Given these special protections, gun manufacturers and dealers face almost no penalties for failing to make their products safer or refusing to take steps to prevent their guns from getting into the wrong hands.

8. Virtually anyone can buy a gun without a background check under current law.

Federal law requires that anyone purchasing a gun from a federally-licensed dealer complete a background check. But private sales at gun shows, over the internet, and between individuals are exempt from this requirement. This dangerous loophole allows people who could not pass a background check and should not own a gun—including those convicted of violent crimes and domestic abuse—to easily obtain one.

9. Common sense gun laws work.

Gun safety laws have proven effective at reducing gun violence and factors associated with gun violence. None of these laws prevent law-abiding citizens from owning guns.

- **Tighter regulation and oversight of gun sellers prevents guns from being diverted to criminals.** A study using data from 54 U.S. cities found diversion of guns to criminals is much less common in states that:
 - license retail gun sellers;
 - require careful record keeping that can be reviewed by law enforcement;
 - require potential gun buyers to apply for a license directly with a law enforcement agency; and
 - conduct regular compliance inspections.²⁰

- **Requiring background checks for purchases through licensed and private sellers prevents guns from getting into the wrong hands.** More than 3 million firearm purchase applications have been denied since the implementation of the 1994 Brady Law,²¹ which instituted a federal background check requirement for sales through licensed dealers. Evidence from California suggests extending background checks to cover not only licensed but also private sellers substantially decreases illegal straw sales (in which a purchaser buys a gun for a person who isn't eligible to buy it).²²
- **Firearm prohibitions for high-risk groups reduce the risk of violent crime.** A study in California suggests denying handgun purchases to people who have committed violent misdemeanors is associated with a decrease in risk of arrest for new gun and/or violent crimes.²³
- **Child access prevention laws save lives.** Studies of child access prevention laws, which require gun owners to store their guns so children and teens cannot access them unsupervised, have found these laws reduce accidental child shootings by as much as 23 percent²⁴ and adolescent suicides by 8 percent.²⁵
- **Well-designed assault weapons bans reduce homicides, suicides and mass shootings.** An Australian law banning and buying back assault weapons—including semi-automatic rifles, pump-action rifles and shotguns—was associated with lower homicide and suicide rates. No mass shootings occurred in the decade after the law was enacted, compared with 11 mass shootings in the decade before.²⁶

10. The majority of American voters, including gun owners, support common sense gun safety regulations.

As of August 2019, the majority of American voters (60 percent) expressed support for stricter gun laws to keep them and their children safe. Ninety-three percent of all voters and gun owners supported universal background checks. Three in five voters (60 percent) favored a nationwide ban on the sale of assault weapons. Nearly 3 in 4 American voters (72 percent) said Congress must do more to reduce gun violence.²⁷ The American people want change.

4x

**MORE CHILDREN
AGREE THAN DISAGREE
IT'S TOO EASY TO
GET A GUN**

Source: Children's Defense Fund's Parent and Child Trends Survey, conducted with YouGov. 2018.



**A child or teen is killed
with a gun every 2 hours
and 34 minutes in
America.**

**Isn't it time to protect
them?**

Progress Since Parkland

“No more violence. We are killing ourselves and our futures.”

– 14-year-old boy, North Carolina

America’s deadly romance with guns resulted in one of its most devastating displays on Valentine’s Day 2018. On February 14, 2018, a 19-year-old armed with an AR-15 killed 17 classmates and teachers and injured 17 others at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Shamefully, this tragedy and the 609 mass shootings that have occurred since are simply the latest examples of a crisis that has been ravaging our communities and classrooms for decades.¹ But 2018 marked a significant turning point: the shooting in Parkland shocked the nation and sparked a wave of positive progress.

A New Generation of Leaders Emerged and Organized an Historic March

After Parkland, a new generation of youth activists stepped up and said never again. Determined to transform outrage and grief into action and change, Parkland survivors mobilized students, teachers, parents, grandparents, faith leaders, doctors, and advocates to decry the senseless killing of children. As a result of these young people’s courageous and committed leadership, Americans stepped off the sidelines and onto the streets. An estimated 1.2 million people participated in the March for Our Lives in Washington, DC and over 750 sites across the nation, making it one of the largest gun violence protests in American history.² From coast to coast, Americans propelled gun violence prevention into mainstream politics and put growing momentum behind the movement to protect children, not guns.

Americans Elected a Gun-Sense Majority to Congress

Americans not only took to the streets after Parkland—they took to the polls. Tired of indifference and inaction in the face of national tragedies, voters turned out in record numbers during the 2018 midterm elections³ and made gun safety a winning issue. Electing 171 gun safety candidates to Congress⁴ and retiring 32 NRA-backed candidates,⁵ voters ushered a gun-sense majority into Congress and established gun violence prevention as a moral imperative and top national priority.

The House Passed the First Major Gun Safety Legislation in 25 Years

With a mandate from voters and a new gun sense majority, the House of Representatives took swift action to protect children and communities from gun violence. In February 2019, the House passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act (H.R. 8)—the first major gun violence prevention legislation to advance out of the chamber in 25 years.⁶ The measure passed 240 to 190, with nearly all Democrats and eight Republicans supporting the bill. If enacted into law, the bill would expand background check requirements to cover nearly all gun sales and transfers. It remains to be seen whether the Senate will vote on this life-saving measure.

States Pushed Forward

With progress stalled in the Senate, a growing number of states took matters into their own hands and enacted measures to keep children safe where they live and learn. Since Parkland, 32 states and the District of Columbia have passed more than 110 gun safety bills.⁷ In 2019 alone, 47 gun safety bills have been passed in 22 states and the District of Columbia.

- **13 states** enacted laws to keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers (AR, CA, KS, LA, MD, NM, NY, OH, OR, PA, UT, VT, WA)
- **12 states and DC** passed extreme risk protection order (ERPO) laws, which empower families and law enforcement officers to temporarily restrict gun access among individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others (CO, DC, DE, FL, HI, IL, MA, MD, NV, NY, NJ, RI, VT)
- **9 states** added new background check requirements or strengthened existing ones (FL, LA, NJ, NM, NV, OR, TN, VT, WA)
- **9 states** increased funding for evidence-based community violence intervention programs (CA, CT, FL, IL, MA, MD, NE, NY, RI)
- **3 states** strengthened child access prevention (CAP) laws to keep guns out of the hands of children (CT, DE, NV)

Many of these laws were enacted in the months after the Parkland shooting—a testament to the youth who organized, raised their voices and demanded their leaders take action.

New Organizations Formed and Existing Ones Redoubled Their Efforts

In the wake of Parkland, several new organizations emerged at both the local and national levels to empower a new generation in the fight against gun violence. Parkland survivors founded **March for Our Lives** to push for sensible gun legislation and mobilize youth across the nation. Since its inception, March for Our Lives has opened more than 100 local chapters and registered thousands of new voters across the United States.⁸

Meanwhile, Everytown and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America launched **Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America** to provide more high school and college students a platform to advocate for common sense gun safety measures in their communities.⁹

Team Enough and **Youth Over Guns** also formed after Parkland to uplift and address the disproportionate impact of gun violence on marginalized youth and communities of color.¹⁰ These youth-led initiatives work to advance community solutions and ensure all children grow up safely.

Longstanding gun violence prevention groups, such as the Brady Campaign and Giffords Law Center, have also redoubled their efforts with renewed passion and purpose, amplifying existing advocacy activities and launching new initiatives to sustain and build upon this progress.

Support for the NRA Plummeted

For the first time in two decades, more Americans have an unfavorable view of the NRA than a favorable one.¹¹ Major corporations like Delta, Hertz, MetLife and United have cut ties with the NRA, ending discount programs for members.¹² The NRA has long used high-paid lobbyists and massive campaign contributions to convince members of Congress to refuse to take action to advance meaningful gun violence reform. As the NRA loses support among the American public, there is growing hope that our political leaders will choose to resist the organization's lobbying efforts and stand with the majority of Americans to pass gun reform laws.

Our Children Are Crying Out: “We Are Afraid”

What worries children most at the start of a new school year? In simpler times it might have been remembering a locker combination or finding a seat at lunch. But in the wake of Parkland and in a climate where active shooter drills are routine, fear of a school shooting is front and center in the minds of America’s children.

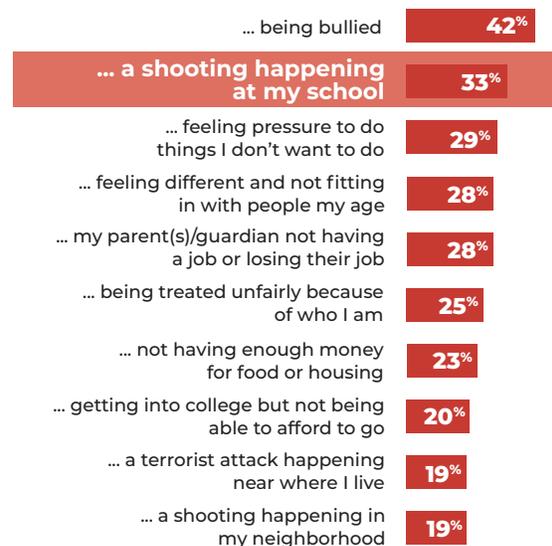
According to the Children’s Defense Fund’s 2018 Parent and Child Trends survey conducted with YouGov, fear of a school shooting is the second most common worry among children ages 6-17. A third of children are worried about a shooting happening at their school. This fear is consistent across racial, ethnic and income groups, suggesting a recent wave of mass shootings has cemented gun violence as an everyday concern among a broad cross-section of America’s children. Only 59 percent of children—and only 42 percent of Black children—say they feel safe at school.

Children’s concerns about safety and gun violence extend beyond schools and classrooms. Although more children feel safe in their neighborhood than in school, more than a third of children do not report feeling safe in their neighborhood.

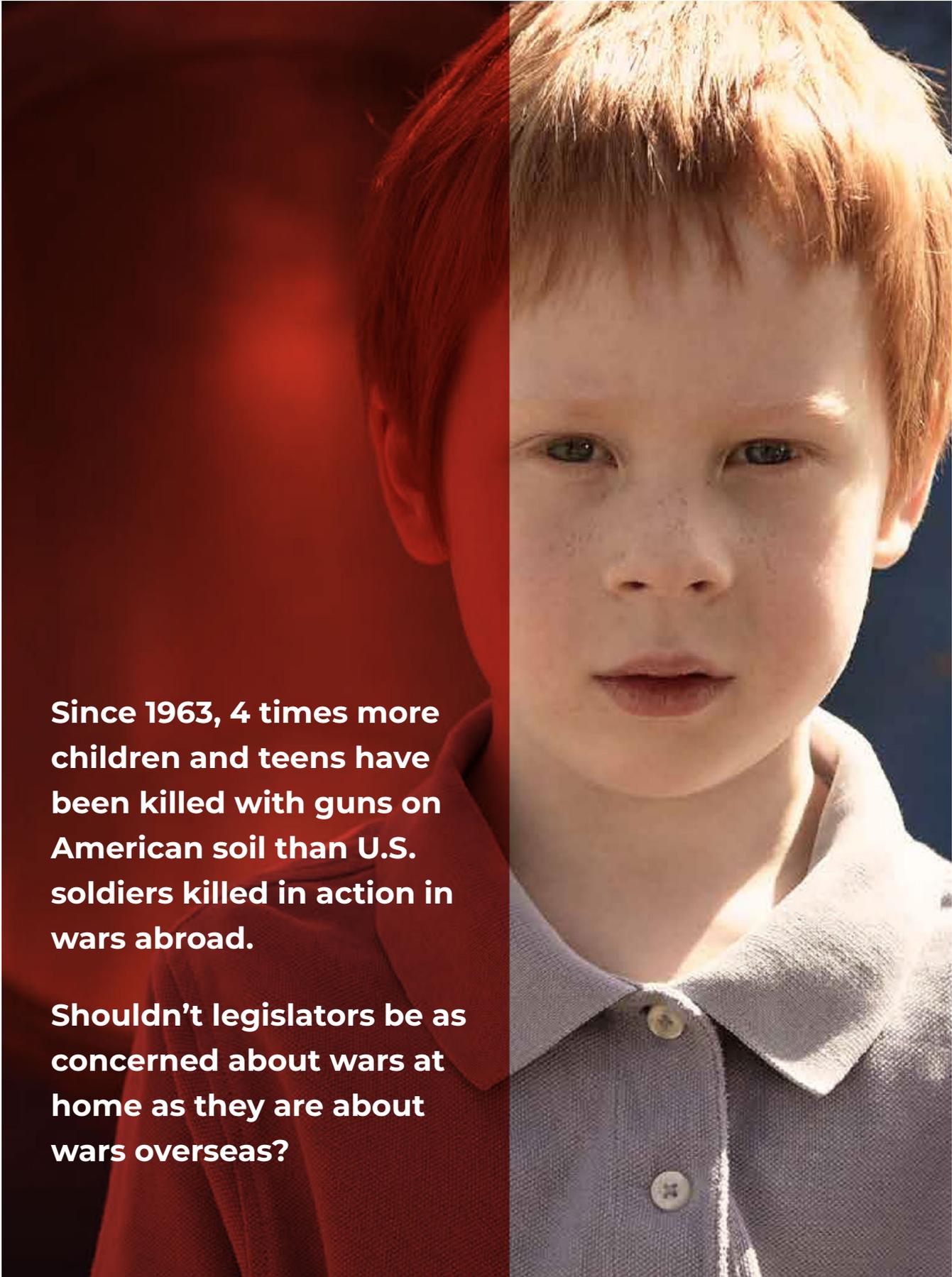
- Black and Hispanic children are much less likely to say they feel safe in their neighborhoods (54 and 52 percent, respectively) than White children (71 percent).
- For Black, Hispanic and low-income children, neighborhood violence is a particular source of anxiety and fear. About 1 in 4 Black and Hispanic children worry about a shooting happening in their neighborhood, compared with 16 percent of White children.
- Among children who worry about a shooting in their neighborhood, 70 percent are concerned about a mass shooting intended to harm as many people as possible.
- Fifty-six percent of children are concerned about a shooting where one person is targeting another and 46 percent are concerned about a gang-related shooting. Concern about gang-related shootings is far more prevalent among Black and Hispanic children.

School Shootings Are Among Top 10 Worries for Children

Children worry about...



Children are learning there are no safe spaces in America and crying out for help. Their cries should be an urgent call to action for all of us—parents, grandparents, neighbors, teachers, advocates and elected officials. Children should feel safe wherever they live, learn and play.



Since 1963, 4 times more children and teens have been killed with guns on American soil than U.S. soldiers killed in action in wars abroad.

Shouldn't legislators be as concerned about wars at home as they are about wars overseas?

We Can Do Better: We Must Strengthen Laws to Save Lives

“Guns have destroyed so much of our lives. When will this madness end?”

– Community Coalition CDF Freedom Schools® Scholar

While we have made significant progress since Parkland, we still have so much more to do to ensure all children can grow up safely. Despite growing grassroots momentum and swelling support for gun safety, federal laws have gone unchanged, lethal loopholes have gone unaddressed and shootings have gone unabated. What is it going to take for our leaders to strengthen laws and save lives? Nearly two years after Parkland and more than 600 mass shootings later, why are children still waiting for meaningful reform and wondering, “When will this madness end?”

It is long past time for leaders to stop the immoral and indefensible killing of children in America. At the federal and state levels, our leaders must enact new common sense gun violence prevention measures and strengthen existing ones to ensure *all* children the chance to live, learn and play free from violence. With a child or teen killed or injured with a gun every 24 minutes, we don't have another moment or life to waste.

Improving Federal Laws

Federal gun laws contain significant gaps and loopholes that limit their effectiveness and threaten our children's safety and lives. Congress can—and must—protect more children and teens from gun violence by:

1. Expanding Background Checks to Cover Private Gun Sales and Transfers

Current federal law does not require background checks for gun sales or transfers at gun shows, on the internet or between private individuals. While the 1993 Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act requires federally-licensed gun dealers to conduct background checks for every sale, private sellers are exempt from this requirement. As a result, about 1 in 5 guns are purchased without a background check.¹ Congress must close this dangerous loophole and ensure criminals and other dangerous individuals cannot easily access firearms. Anyone who attempts to purchase a gun should be subject to a criminal background check, regardless of where and from whom they buy it. Background checks do not prevent legal gun sales, but they could prevent child and teen gun deaths.

2. Reinstating a Ban on Assault Weapons and High-Capacity Magazines

Between 1994 and 2004, assault weapons and high-capacity magazines were banned under federal law. The 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act outlawed the manufacture and sale of semi-automatic assault weapons with two or more military features and high capacity magazines containing more than 10 rounds of ammunition. The ban was modest, but even in limited form it substantially reduced mass shootings. Over the 10 years the ban was in place, gun massacres fell 43 percent.²

Shamefully, Congress failed to renew the ban in 2004 and has yet to pass any new restrictions on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Our leaders' inaction has had devastating consequences. Since the ban expired in 2004, these uniquely dangerous weapons have been used in some of our nation's deadliest mass shootings, including the tragedies at:

- Virginia Tech in 2007;
- Tucson in 2011;
- Aurora and Sandy Hook in 2012;
- San Bernardino in 2015;
- Pulse Nightclub in 2016;
- Route 91 Harvest Music Festival in Las Vegas and First Baptist Church in 2017;
- Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Waffle House and the Tree of Life Synagogue in 2018; and
- Virginia Beach, Gilroy, El Paso and Dayton in 2019.

In fact, gun massacres increased 183 percent in the decade after Congress allowed the ban to lapse.³

Congress must immediately reinstitute a ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines and establish a buyback program to remove existing ones from our streets. Military-style weapons have no place in civilian hands.

3. Enacting Extreme Risk Laws to Prevent Tragedies Before They Occur

While many individuals display warning signs before harming themselves or others, federal law provides no legal mechanism for loved ones or law enforcement officers to intervene and prevent a moment of crisis from becoming an irreversible tragedy. For this reason, law enforcement had no authority to disarm the 19-year-old gunman at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School despite having received tips about his gun ownership, continued threats of violence and erratic behavior beforehand.⁴

When loved ones and law enforcement officers have warning signs and time to prevent tragedies, they should have tools to do so. Congress must pass federal extreme risk legislation to authorize families or law enforcement to petition a judge to issue an extreme risk protection order (ERPO) and temporarily disarm individuals displaying signs of endangering themselves or others. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia have already enacted extreme risk laws and research confirms these laws save lives.⁵ Evidence from Connecticut suggests at least one gun tragedy was prevented for every 10-20 extreme risk protection orders issued.⁶

4. Requiring Consumer Safety Standards and Childproof Safety Features for Guns

Federal law is silent on gun-related consumer safety standards. In fact, the production and manufacture of guns is specifically exempt from oversight by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. As a result, many guns do not undergo proper safety testing or do not contain easily-installed, life-saving safety features.

Congress must subject guns to the same consumer product safety regulations that cover virtually every other consumer product, including toy guns and teddy bears. Applying consumer safety standards to guns will ensure design flaws are identified and corrected and child safety features like trigger locks are installed. Every gun in this country should be childproof.

5. Enacting Safe Storage and Child Access Prevention Laws

Although 1 in 3 American households with children have guns,⁷ federal law does not require gun owners to lock or store firearms safely to ensure children and teens cannot access them unsupervised. While licensed importers, dealers or manufacturers must include a locking device with guns sold or transferred, gun owners are not required to use it. Moreover, gun owners face no penalties if they leave a gun unsecured and/or a child uses that gun to harm themselves or others.

This gap in federal law has tragic consequences. Each day in America, eight children and teens are killed or injured in accidental shootings involving an improperly stored gun.⁸ Congress must enact safe storage requirements and child access prevention laws to ensure guns are stored securely and safely—out of the hands of children. A recent study estimates up to a third of child and teen gun injuries and deaths could be prevented if guns and ammunition were safely stored.⁹

“He will be forever 3 years old.”

“He will be forever 3 years old.” These were the words of Arika Williams shortly after her 3-year-old son **Aiden** accidentally shot and killed himself last year in South Carolina.¹⁰

On May 4, 2018, she dropped off Aiden and his older brother Akai to spend the night with their dad. While the adults played cards and the big kids watched basketball, Aiden wandered around the trailer in search of something to play with. The 3-year-old encountered many options along his path: a set of colorful magnetic letters on the fridge, a jar of Play-Doh beside the couch, a bag of cinnamon twists on the table, and a loaded gun within reach. Aiden picked up the gun. Akai heard a boom. And, in an instant, a toddler’s curiosity turned into a heart-wrenching tragedy.

Aiden’s death, like the deaths of many other children and teens, never had to happen. If safe storage and child access prevention laws had been in place, Aiden might still be sharing a bunk bed with his brother, learning to ride his bicycle and following his dreams.

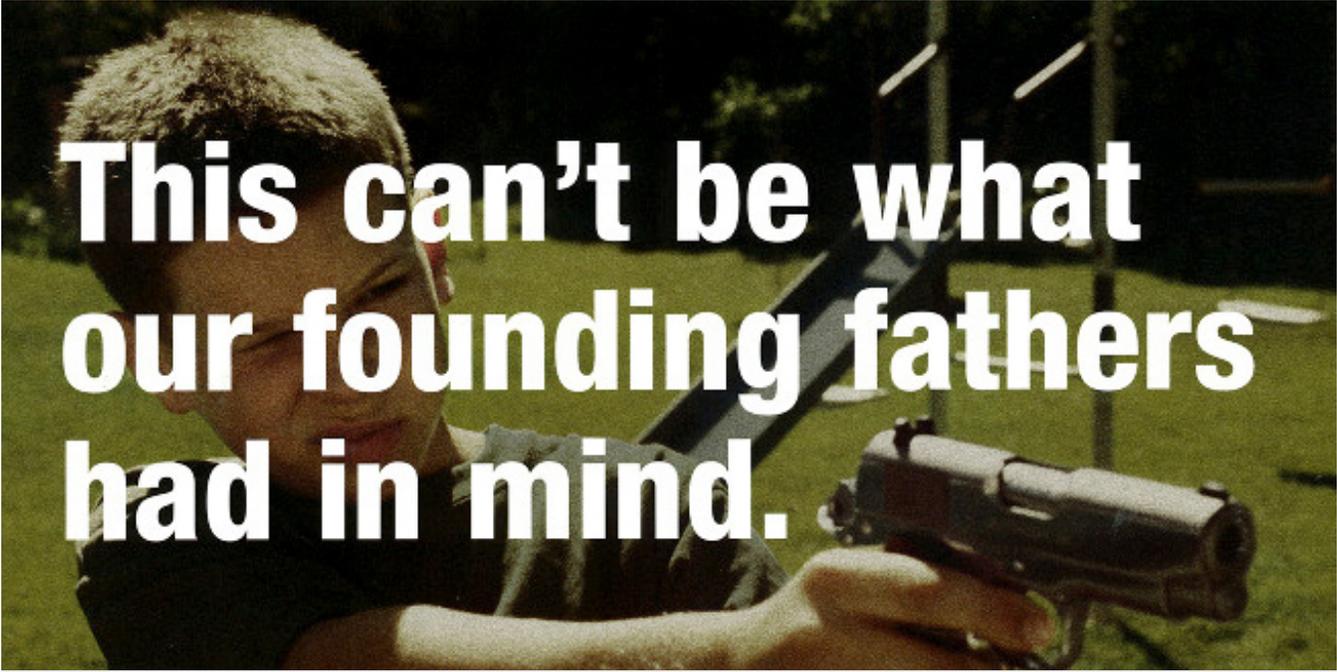
6. Strengthening Minimum Age Requirements for Purchasing and Possessing Guns

While federal law places some age restrictions on the purchase and possession of guns, these restrictions vary by the type of gun and seller.¹¹ Accordingly, children and teens can still access these lethal weapons.

Federal law prohibits licensed dealers from selling handguns to anyone under 21, but it does not prohibit individuals ages 18 and up from possessing handguns or purchasing them from private sellers.

Laws governing the sale and possession of long guns like rifles or shotguns are even more lenient. Federal law only prohibits licensed dealers from selling long guns to anyone under 18—not 21—and imposes no age restrictions on private sellers. Moreover, there are no federal age restrictions on the possession of long guns. Only 24 states have stricter minimum age requirements for long gun possession, meaning children can legally own rifles and shotguns in a majority of states.

Congress must raise minimum age requirements for the purchase or possession of all guns to 21, regardless of the type of gun or seller. Children and teens should not be armed.



**This can't be what
our founding fathers
had in mind.**

The Children's Defense Fund has been advocating for gun violence prevention laws to protect our children for decades. We published this ad after the Columbine shooting in 1999—and it is just as relevant today.

7. Funding Gun Violence Prevention Research

For decades, the NRA and its Congressional allies have succeeded in shutting down federally funded research on gun violence prevention. In 1996, alarmed by the potential impact of recent public health research indicating that guns in the home were associated with higher rates of homicide and suicide, the NRA convinced lawmakers to prohibit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from spending any funds to promote or advocate for gun control and cut CDC funding for gun violence prevention research.¹² In 2011, the NRA did the same thing for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As a result, we know far less than we need to about what works to prevent gun deaths and injuries.

Congress must retire the NRA as head of public health and reinstate federal funding for the CDC, NIH and other agencies to study gun violence prevention. Americans should be armed with information, not guns.

8. Improving Enforcement of Existing Gun Laws

Since the 1970s, the NRA has made it considerably more difficult for federal agencies and local law enforcement to hold criminal gun dealers and traffickers accountable and keep illegal guns off the streets.¹³ Working with its allies in Congress, the NRA has successfully:

- Prevented law enforcement from using gun trace data—data linking crime guns to the retailers that first sold them—in certain legal proceedings;
- Prohibited the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) from requiring dealers keep inventories of their stock of weapons;
- Banned electronic storage of gun sale records, thereby preventing efficient analysis of data to find suspicious patterns and identify the sources of crime guns;
- Limited the resources and operating flexibility of ATF; and
- Banned the disclosure of gun trace data to the public, including researchers.

As a result, the ATF, which is responsible for ensuring guns are not sold to prohibited buyers, is unable to effectively enforce existing gun laws and local law enforcement agencies face unnecessary hurdles when trying to limit gun crimes in their jurisdictions.

Congress must stop hampering the ATF from enforcing laws on the books and provide ATF the resources and regulatory authority it needs to hold criminal gun dealers and traffickers accountable.

9. Ending Special Protections for the Gun Industry

Under the 2005 the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA), the gun industry enjoys unprecedented immunity from legal liability in state and federal courts. PLCAA prevents victims from seeking redress in most cases, shielding the gun industry from accountability for negligence. As a result, gun manufacturers and dealers have no incentive to make their products safer or adopt smarter business practices. Congress must repeal PLCAA and remove special protections for the gun industry. No industry should be above the law. Child lives must come before special interests.

10. Increasing Services for Children Experiencing Violence and Trauma

Children exposed to violence or the threat of violence in their homes and communities suffer profound lifelong consequences. They are more likely to suffer depression, anxiety and impulse control issues, increasing their likelihood of engaging in substance abuse, committing crime and becoming violent themselves. Throughout their lives, children exposed to violence are more susceptible to heart disease, cancer and a number of other health disorders. Violence can even impact children on a biological level, hindering their ability to manage stress and altering their DNA.

More robust services are needed to address the impact of violence on children and prevent future violence. Congress must expand the reach of programs that build resilience by addressing social and emotional needs in communities and schools and fund initiatives to increase the number of qualified mental health professionals in schools. Congress must restore and increase funding for evidence-based, trauma-informed therapies that have been proven to help children recover from the trauma they have experienced. Importantly, Congress must ensure that those services are available to all children, especially those most likely to experience or witness gun violence, who often live in communities where these high-quality services are not available or affordable.

Improving State Laws

It is imperative that the President and Congress advance these essential and sensible changes at the federal level: a child's zip code should not determine whether or not she is protected from gun violence. At the same time, state and local governments should continue taking steps to save child lives. States can protect more children from gunfire by:

1. **Encouraging Safe Storage:** Only 27 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws to prevent children from accessing guns and even fewer have passed laws requiring gun-locking devices.¹⁴ This stands in stark contrast to state efforts to protect children from other harms. All 50 states have passed child safety seat laws;¹⁵ 49 states and D.C. have passed seat belt violation laws;¹⁶ 48 states and D.C. have passed laws enforcing a requirement for personal flotation devices for both recreational boats and personal watercrafts for children;¹⁷ and 21 states and D.C. have passed laws requiring children to wear bike helmets.¹⁸ In the absence of federal safe storage laws, all states must pass locking device requirements and hold adults accountable for leaving guns unsecured in the presence of children.

- 2. Expanding Background Checks:** Only 21 states and the District of Columbia have extended background check requirements beyond federal law.¹⁹ States do not need to wait for Congress to pass universal background check requirements; they can and must enact their own right now.
- 3. Supporting Assault Weapons Bans:** Only seven states and the District of Columbia have state laws banning assault weapons.²⁰ Military-style weapons should not be legal in any state.
- 4. Opposing Efforts to Arm Teachers:** Only a third of children and even fewer parents across our nation feel arming teachers would keep children safer.²¹ Arming teachers does not prevent violence—and it often puts children at greater risk. States must advance legitimate solutions for improving school safety. Positive alternatives to armed guards and teachers include threat assessment teams, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and restorative justice practices. All have proven effective in reducing violence, improving school safety and maintaining a positive school climate that allows teachers to teach and students to learn.²²
- 5. Repealing Concealed Carry Laws:** Many states allow concealed firearms in schools, child care centers, churches or other public venues where children gather. Eight states permit or do not prohibit concealed carry of firearms at K-12 schools.²³ Only 11 states and the District of Columbia prohibit concealed carry in day care or child care facilities.²⁴ States must repeal concealed carry laws and put children’s right to safety before adults’ right to carry concealed weapons.
- 6. Eliminating Stand Your Ground Laws:** A majority of states have enacted “stand your ground” laws that permit individuals to use deadly force even when they could safely retreat without firing a gun.²⁵ These dangerous laws encourage a shoot first and ask questions later approach to everyday confrontations. States must repeal existing “stand your ground” laws and resist efforts to enact new ones.

Bulletproof Backpacks: Is This “The Best We Can Do”?

Some school supplies are timeless, like yellow No. 2 pencils or marbled composition notebooks. Others belong to distinct decades, like the Trapper Keeper portfolios of the 1980s or fluorescent gel pens of the 1990s. For children of this generation, however, the trends are far less whimsical: bulletproof backpacks.

Ballistic goods are an increasingly popular offering among American retailers’ back-to-school gear, according to a recent *Washington Post* article.²⁶ Office supply chains and specialty companies alike are marketing bulletproof whiteboards, chair cushions, backpacks, clipboards, binder inserts and more to parents of schoolchildren. And as incidents of gun violence grow, so too do sales.

Parents know these everyday ballistic devices don’t guarantee security and understand that peace of mind can’t be bought. “What we really need is gun reform,” one mother of a 6-year-old said. “But our lawmakers are not moving at the speed parents need them to, so this is the best we can do.”

Something is fundamentally broken in our country when back-to-school shopping includes bulletproof supplies. Children and teens deserve to feel safe in their communities and classrooms—no tactical gear required.

Stand Up and Take Action

“Please keep us safe.”

– 12-year-old boy, New Jersey

The responsibility to protect children does not lie solely with elected officials. All of us have a role to play in keeping our children safe and ending our gun violence epidemic. To protect children from firearms in their homes, schools, neighborhoods and nation, you can:

- 1. Urge the President, Congress, and state and local officials to advance common sense gun regulations.** Advocate for strong federal, state and local legislation to keep children safe where they live and learn. Stay informed. Contact your elected officials to express your views on the urgent need for gun measures to protect children from gun violence. Call your members of Congress at (202) 224-3121.
- 2. Remove guns from your home and be vigilant about where children play. It is not enough to talk to children about the dangers of guns.** Children exposed to gun safety programs are no less likely to play with guns than those who are not exposed to such classes. Removing guns from the home and asking if there are guns in the homes of your children’s friends are the best ways to protect your children from gun deaths.
- 3. Foster a climate of nonviolent conflict resolution in your home, your children’s school, your place of worship and your community.** Gun violence in our society is epidemic, child abuse and neglect is widespread, and children are constantly exposed to images and messages of hate and brutality. Make sure as a parent, teacher, religious or civic leader you do not engage in violence or teach children by word or deed that violence is the way to resolve conflicts and disputes. Speak out against racial discrimination and hate crimes that contribute to community violence and division. Partner with schools, community groups and places of worship to organize nonviolent conflict resolution support groups and push for adoption of a conflict resolution curriculum in local schools.
- 4. Refuse to buy or use children’s products that glamorize or normalize violence.** Boycott products that glamorize violence or make violence seem fun. Turn off violent programming and read with your children instead. Talk to them about the importance of rejecting violence as a cultural or personal value.
- 5. Raise awareness about child and teen gun deaths. Educate others about the devastating impact of gun violence on children and teens.**
 - Organize a group of community leaders to witness firsthand the effects of gun violence. Let them hear from gun violence survivors. Arrange visits with medical staff from local hospitals who treat gun violence victims and comfort their families.
 - Encourage your place of worship to read the names of children killed by gunfire in your community. Consider creating a memorial to honor young lives stolen by gun violence.
 - Urge local newspapers and media outlets to uplift stories of children and teens killed with guns in your community.
 - Write a letter-to-the-editor or an opinion column about the tragic loss of young lives to gun violence.

- 6. Mobilize support to protect children from gun violence.** Use informal gatherings like study groups, prayer circles and book clubs to talk about ways to protect children in your community. Invite youths from college campuses and high schools to participate in community dialogues and actions. Help mount a massive moral witness and mobilization against gun violence in our society.
- 7. Provide children positive alternatives to the streets where they can feel safe and protected.** Many children and teens are exposed to gangs, drugs, violence and guns on a daily basis. We must offer them positive alternatives and role models, especially during after-school hours, weekends and summers. Consider hosting a high-quality summer or after-school program at your school or place of worship. Visit our website (www.childrensdefense.org) for more information about the CDF Freedom Schools® literacy enrichment model, which includes nonviolence training.
- 8. Offer refuge and resources for children exposed to violence.** Schools, places of worship, community health centers and other community institutions should offer safe spaces after school and on weekends for children and teens who have experienced or witnessed gun violence. Provide support and resources to help these children and their parents understand, confront and deal with the anger, fear and loss of control they may feel. Acknowledge the negative impact violence can have not only on children who are direct victims or who have lost siblings or friends to violence, but also on those who live in constant fear of gun violence in their communities.

Parent by parent, youth by youth, doctor by doctor, congregation by congregation, school by school, and neighborhood by neighborhood, we must breathe life and security into our communities. Together, we can build a nation that is safe for every child.

Freedom from Violence

In July 2019, scholars from CDF Freedom Schools® participated in a National Day of Social Action to raise awareness about gun violence in their communities. Scholars in Minnesota, New York, Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, South Carolina, Florida, Maryland, and other states marched to their capitol buildings and places of power. In Missouri, scholars met with lawmakers to discuss their own anti-gun violence campaign. In Washington, DC, scholars hosted a rally at the U.S. Capitol. In Tennessee, scholars and advocates gathered for an interfaith advocacy ministry. In Georgia, scholars hosted an open mic to uplift the voices of children and teens impacted by gun violence. Scholars in California created a powerful music video to inform and inspire action. Across our nation, thousands of children sent a resounding message to adults: protect children, not guns. It is time to heed our children's calls and prove they can count on us to keep them safe.



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A Note About Data Sources

The data used in this report to describe gun deaths in U.S. children and teens are from death certificate data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. Every death is included in the vital statistics system. Child and teen gun fatalities were calculated using CDC WONDER.

Another source of data for some gun deaths is law enforcement reports of murders. There is a national system that collects these data—the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) system—but this system is not complete. Not all law enforcement agencies participate in this system and coverage varies from year to year. Further, UCR covers only homicide deaths.

A comparison of this system with the vital statistics system shows that UCR does not capture all firearm homicides among children and teens. For this reason we do not use FBI UCR data to describe child gun deaths.

Nonfatal injury data are from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). These data are collected by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and processed by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The data are collected from a sample of emergency rooms representative of the nation as a whole. National estimates are extrapolated from the data collected from this sample. No state-level data are available through this system. Non-fatal gun injury estimates were calculated using CDC WISQARS.

Data for other high-income nations were collected through the World Health Organization (WHO) European Mortality Database, which aggregates vital statistics data from countries around the world.

All gun death and injury data in this report exclude gun deaths resulting from legal (police and corrections) intervention. When possible, data by race/ethnicity separate out children and teens of Hispanic origin regardless of race from children and teens of other races.

Table 1: Child and Teen Gun Deaths by Age, Sex, Manner and Race/Ethnicity, 2017

	Ages 0-4	Ages 5-9	Ages 10-14	Ages 15-19	Boys	Girls	Total 0-19 both sexes
All Race/Ethnicities	93	99	338	2,880	2,945	465	3,410
Homicide	56	78	126	1,667	1,637	290	1,927
Suicide	0	1	185	1,110	1,144	152	1,296
Accidental	32	14	16	53	102	13	115
Undetermined	5	6	11	50	62	10	72
Black, non-Hispanic	45	39	90	1,225	1,237	162	1,399
Homicide	26	29	65	1,081	1,063	138	1,201
Suicide	0	0	20	115	118	17	135
Accidental	17	6	5	14	37	5	42
Undetermined	2	4	0	15	19	2	21
White, non-Hispanic	37	41	191	1,062	1,132	199	1,331
Homicide	21	34	35	222	228	84	312
Suicide	0	0	137	791	824	104	928
Accidental	13	0	8	28	49	6	55
Undetermined	3	0	11	21	31	5	36
Hispanic	10	17	47	507	489	92	581
Homicide	8	14	25	337	319	65	384
Suicide	0	1	19	150	146	24	170
Accidental	2	1	3	9	14	1	15
Undetermined	0	1	0	11	10	2	12
American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	0	1	2	44	44	3	47
Homicide	0	0	0	14	14	0	14
Suicide	0	0	2	26	27	1	28
Accidental	0	1	0	1	1	1	2
Undetermined	0	0	0	3	2	1	3
Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	1	1	8	42	43	9	52
Homicide	1	1	1	13	13	3	16
Suicide	0	0	7	28	29	6	35
Accidental	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Undetermined	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: All racial and ethnic groups are mutually exclusive. Non-Hispanic classification includes children with nothing stated for Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2017 on CDC WONDER Online Database. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>. Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Table 2: Gun Death Rates per 100,000 Children and Teens by Age, Sex, Manner and Race/Ethnicity, 2017

	Ages 0-4	Ages 5-9	Ages 10-14	Ages 15-19	Boys	Girls	Total 0-19 both sexes
All Race/Ethnicities	0.47	0.49	1.63	13.63	7.02	1.16	4.15
Homicide	0.28	0.38	0.61	7.89	3.90	0.72	2.35
Suicide	0	0.005*	0.89	5.25	2.73	0.38	1.58
Accidental	0.16	0.07*	0.08*	0.25	0.24	0.03*	0.14
Undetermined	0.03*	0.03*	0.05*	0.24	0.15	0.02*	0.09
Black, non-Hispanic	1.47	1.26	2.91	38.23	19.53	2.64	11.22
Homicide	0.85	0.93	2.11	33.73	16.78	2.25	9.63
Suicide	0	0	0.65	3.59	1.87	0.28*	1.08
Accidental	0.56*	0.19*	0.16*	0.44*	0.59	0.08*	0.34
Undetermined	0.07*	0.13*	0	0.47*	0.30*	0.03*	0.17
White, non-Hispanic	0.35	0.39	1.69	9.13	5.04	0.93	3.04
Homicide	0.19	0.32	0.32	1.91	1.02	0.40	0.71
Suicide	0	0	1.22	6.79	3.67	0.49	2.12
Accidental	0.13*	0.06*	0.07*	0.24	0.22	0.03*	0.13
Undetermined	0.03*	0.01*	0.09*	0.18	0.13	0.02*	0.08
Hispanic	0.19*	0.32*	0.91	10.35	4.67	0.91	2.83
Homicide	0.15*	0.27*	0.48	6.88	3.05	0.65	1.87
Suicide	0	0.02*	0.37*	3.06	1.40	0.24	0.83
Accidental	0.04*	0.02*	0.06*	0.18*	0.13*	0.01*	0.07*
Undetermined	0	0.02*	0	0.22*	0.10*	0.02*	0.06*
American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	0	0.49*	0.97*	20.58	10.39	0.74*	5.63
Homicide	0	0	0	6.22*	3.14*	0	1.59*
Suicide	0	0	0.97*	12.44	6.52	0.25*	3.43
Accidental	0	0.49*	0	0.48*	0.24*	0.25*	0.24*
Undetermined	0	0	0	1.44*	0.48*	0.25*	0.37*
Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	0.09*	0.08*	0.66*	3.42	1.76	0.38*	1.08
Homicide	0.09*	0.08*	0.08*	1.06*	0.53*	0.13*	0.33*
Suicide	0	0	0.58*	2.28	1.19	0.25*	0.73
Accidental	0	0	0	0.08*	0.04*	0	0.02*
Undetermined	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Rates are unreliable because based on fewer than 20 deaths.

Note: All racial/ethnic groups are mutually exclusive. Non-Hispanic groups include those with nothing stated for Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2017 on CDC WONDER Online Database. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>. Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund

Table 3: Gun Death Numbers and Rates per 100,000 Children and Teens, 1963-2017

	Total		Homicide		Suicide		Accident		Unknown	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
1963	1,781	2.41	476	0.64	365	0.49	940	1.27	—	—
1964	1,857	2.47	557	0.74	390	0.52	910	1.21	—	—
1965	1,870	2.45	589	0.77	402	0.53	879	1.15	—	—
1966	2,208	2.86	734	0.95	450	0.58	1,024	1.33	—	—
1967	2,536	3.30	883	1.15	507	0.66	1,146	1.49	—	—
1968	2,733	3.55	1,047	1.36	551	0.72	995	1.29	140	0.18
1969	2,893	3.75	1,215	1.58	607	0.79	938	1.22	133	0.17
1970	2,966	3.84	1,343	1.74	592	0.77	916	1.19	115	0.15
1971	3,251	4.20	1,404	1.81	721	0.93	964	1.25	162	0.21
1972	3,496	4.53	1,466	1.90	820	1.06	1,056	1.37	154	0.20
1973	3,646	4.75	1,575	2.05	863	1.12	1,036	1.35	172	0.22
1974	3,880	5.09	1,689	2.21	986	1.29	1,008	1.32	197	0.26
1975	3,811	5.04	1,658	2.19	1,044	1.38	923	1.22	186	0.25
1976	3,407	4.55	1,492	1.99	977	1.30	790	1.05	148	0.20
1977	3,701	4.99	1,494	2.02	1,264	1.71	782	1.06	161	0.22
1978	3,486	4.75	1,517	2.07	1,149	1.57	669	0.91	151	0.21
1979	3,710	5.09	1,651	2.27	1,220	1.67	726	1.00	113	0.16
1980	3,749	5.17	1,743	2.40	1,214	1.67	689	0.95	103	0.14
1981	3,589	5.00	1,660	2.31	1,213	1.69	604	0.84	112	0.16
1982	3,332	4.67	1,498	2.10	1,207	1.69	550	0.77	77	0.11
1983	2,962	4.18	1,238	1.75	1,150	1.62	504	0.71	70	0.10
1984	3,030	4.30	1,289	1.83	1,114	1.58	552	0.78	75	0.11
1985	3,169	4.51	1,322	1.88	1,256	1.79	519	0.74	72	0.10
1986	3,349	4.76	1,513	2.15	1,293	1.84	472	0.67	71	0.10
1987	3,400	4.81	1,573	2.23	1,281	1.81	467	0.66	79	0.11
1988	3,974	5.59	1,953	2.75	1,387	1.95	543	0.76	91	0.13
1989	4,384	6.13	2,367	3.31	1,380	1.93	567	0.79	70	0.10
1990	4,935	6.86	2,852	3.96	1,476	2.05	541	0.75	66	0.09
1991	5,329	7.34	3,247	4.47	1,436	1.98	551	0.76	95	0.13
1992	5,353	7.28	3,336	4.54	1,426	1.94	501	0.68	90	0.12
1993	5,715	7.65	3,625	4.85	1,460	1.96	526	0.70	104	0.14
1994	5,793	7.64	3,579	4.72	1,565	2.06	512	0.68	137	0.18
1995	5,254	6.85	3,249	4.23	1,450	1.89	440	0.57	115	0.15
1996	4,613	5.93	2,836	3.65	1,309	1.68	376	0.48	92	0.12
1997	4,205	5.35	2,562	3.26	1,262	1.61	306	0.39	75	0.10
1998	3,761	4.73	2,184	2.75	1,241	1.56	262	0.33	74	0.09
1999	3,365	4.20	1,990	2.49	1,078	1.35	214	0.27	83	0.10
2000	3,012	3.74	1,776	2.21	1,007	1.25	193	0.24	36	0.04
2001	2,911	3.60	1,771	2.19	928	1.15	182	0.22	30	0.04
2002	2,867	3.53	1,830	2.25	828	1.02	167	0.21	42	0.05
2003	2,827	3.47	1,822	2.24	810	0.99	151	0.19	44	0.05
2004	2,825	3.46	1,804	2.21	846	1.03	143	0.17	32	0.04
2005	3,006	3.67	1,972	2.40	822	1.00	173	0.21	39	0.05
2006	3,184	3.87	2,225	2.70	763	0.93	154	0.19	42	0.05
2007	3,042	3.68	2,161	2.61	683	0.83	138	0.17	60	0.07
2008	2,947	3.55	2,037	2.45	748	0.90	123	0.15	39	0.05
2009	2,793	3.35	1,855	2.23	800	0.96	114	0.14	24	0.03
2010	2,694	3.24	1,773	2.13	749	0.90	134	0.16	38	0.05
2011	2,674	3.23	1,651	1.99	850	1.03	140	0.17	33	0.04
2012	2,658	3.22	1,664	2.02	861	1.04	110	0.13	23	0.03
2013	2,445	2.97	1,410	1.71	877	1.07	124	0.15	34	0.04
2014	2,524	3.07	1,464	1.78	932	1.13	93	0.11	35	0.04
2015	2,799	3.41	1,645	2.00	1,017	1.24	100	0.12	37	0.05
2016	3,128	3.81	1,849	2.25	1,102	1.34	127	0.15	50	0.06
2017	3,410	4.15	1,927	2.35	1,296	1.58	115	0.14	72	0.09
Total	186,239	—	99,042	—	55,025	—	27,879	—	4,293	—

Note: Children and teens include deaths in those aged 0 to 19. Deaths include homicides, suicides, accidents and deaths of undetermined intent, but exclude deaths from legal intervention. Deaths of unknown or undetermined intent are unavailable prior to 1968. Gun deaths from 1963-1978 include a very small number of deaths from explosives (estimated to be less than 50 deaths).

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Data for 1963-1967 are from annual Vital Statistics of the United States reports, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/vsus.htm>. Data for 1968-2017 are from Detailed Mortality Files 1968-1978, 1979-1998, and 1999-2017, accessed through CDC WONDER Online Database at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>. Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Table 4: Gun Death Numbers and Rates per 100,000 Children and Teens by Race/Ethnicity, 1963–2017

	Black*		White*		Hispanic**		American Indian or Alaska Native**		Asian or Pacific Islander**	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
1963	406	4.3	1,316	2.1	—	—	—	—	—	—
1964	460	4.8	1,367	2.1	—	—	—	—	—	—
1965	523	5.3	1,321	2.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
1966	658	6.5	1,523	2.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
1967	776	7.6	1,726	2.6	—	—	—	—	—	—
1968	899	8.7	1,806	2.7	—	—	—	—	—	—
1969	1,051	10.1	1,812	2.8	—	—	—	—	—	—
1970	1,103	10.5	1,809	2.8	—	—	—	—	—	—
1971	1,191	11.2	2,007	3.1	—	—	—	—	—	—
1972	1,194	11.2	2,258	3.5	—	—	—	—	—	—
1973	1,185	11.0	2,412	3.7	—	—	—	—	—	—
1974	1,169	10.9	2,643	4.1	—	—	—	—	—	—
1975	1,083	10.1	2,662	4.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
1976	936	8.7	2,404	3.8	—	—	—	—	—	—
1977	868	8.1	2,756	4.4	—	—	—	—	—	—
1978	832	7.8	2,580	4.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
1979	929	8.7	2,700	4.5	—	—	—	—	—	—
1980	944	8.8	2,739	4.6	—	—	—	—	—	—
1981	944	8.9	2,569	4.3	—	—	49	7.7	27	1.9
1982	811	7.6	2,450	4.2	—	—	55	7.1	23	1.5
1983	739	7.0	2,155	3.7	—	—	42	6.3	25	1.5
1984	716	6.8	2,238	3.9	—	—	44	6.5	32	1.8
1985	850	8.0	2,241	3.9	—	—	42	6.0	36	1.9
1986	938	8.8	2,337	4.1	—	—	43	6.0	31	1.6
1987	1,117	10.4	2,199	3.8	—	—	28	3.8	54	2.6
1988	1,458	13.5	2,405	4.2	—	—	76	7.3	53	2.4
1989	1,694	15.5	2,563	4.5	—	—	50	6.3	76	3.2
1990	2,010	18.4	1,996	4.0	748	8.6	46	6.5	81	3.5
1991	2,264	21.0	2,003	4.0	883	9.7	57	7.9	88	3.7
1992	2,341	21.3	1,913	3.8	924	9.7	53	7.2	98	4.0
1993	2,577	22.9	1,964	3.9	977	9.8	51	6.8	135	5.3
1994	2,547	22.2	2,047	4.1	993	9.5	71	9.2	134	5.1
1995	2,139	18.3	1,914	3.8	1,005	9.2	65	8.2	127	4.6
1996	1,960	16.5	1,672	3.3	817	7.1	60	7.4	94	3.3
1997	1,667	13.9	1,619	3.2	748	6.2	56	6.8	101	3.4
1998	1,411	11.6	1,543	3.0	661	5.2	56	6.7	87	2.8
1999	1,289	10.5	1,349	2.7	605	4.6	49	5.8	73	2.3
2000	1,140	9.2	1,207	2.4	568	4.2	42	4.8	55	1.7
2001	1,119	9.0	1,194	2.4	518	3.6	42	4.8	38	1.1
2002	1,105	8.8	1,070	2.2	581	3.9	47	5.4	64	1.9
2003	1,166	9.3	1,011	2.1	553	3.6	49	5.7	48	1.4
2004	1,137	9.0	1,014	2.1	574	3.6	54	6.3	46	1.3
2005	1,258	10.0	1,028	2.1	614	3.8	47	5.5	59	1.6
2006	1,426	11.3	960	2.0	678	4.0	43	5.0	77	2.0
2007	1,475	11.6	880	1.8	611	3.5	39	4.5	37	0.9
2008	1,360	10.6	945	2.0	563	3.1	41	4.8	38	0.9
2009	1,195	9.3	970	2.1	566	3.0	35	4.1	27	0.6
2010	1,205	9.4	909	2.0	512	2.7	41	4.8	27	0.6
2011	1,102	8.7	1,056	2.3	453	2.3	32	3.8	31	0.7
2012	1,151	9.1	995	2.2	450	2.3	34	4.0	28	0.6
2013	982	7.9	994	2.2	394	2.0	33	4.0	42	0.9
2014	1,019	8.1	1,028	2.3	410	2.1	31	3.7	36	0.8
2015	1,186	9.5	1,095	2.5	429	2.1	51	6.2	38	0.8
2016	1,337	10.7	1,198	2.7	495	2.4	39	4.6	59	1.2
2017	1,399	11.2	1,331	3.0	581	2.8	47	5.6	52	1.1
Total	67,441		95,903		17,911		1,740		2,177	

*Starting in 1990, data for White, Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander racial categories exclude children of Hispanic ethnicity.

** Data for American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander children and teens were unavailable prior 1981. Data for Hispanic children were unavailable prior to 1990.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Data for 1963-1967 are from annual Vital Statistics of the United States reports, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/vsus.htm>. Data for 1968-1980 and for 1999-2017 are from Compressed Mortality Files 1968-1978, 1979-1998, and 1999-2017, accessed through CDC WONDER Online Database at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>. Data for 1981-1998 are from Multiple Cause of Death files accessed through the Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) at <http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate9.html>. Data includes deaths among children and teens ages 0 to 19, inclusive. Gun deaths include homicides, suicides, accidents and deaths of undetermined intent, but exclude deaths from legal intervention. Gun deaths from 1963-1978 include a very small number of deaths from explosives (estimated to be fewer than 50 deaths). Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Table 5: Child and Teen Gun Deaths by State, 2008-2017

	Overall Gun Deaths	Overall Gun Death Rate	State Rank [^]	Homicide Gun Deaths	Homicide Gun Death Rate	Suicide Gun Deaths	Suicide Gun Death Rate	Accidental Gun Deaths	Accidental Gun Death Rate
Alabama	647	5.2	44	393	3.1	199	1.6	45	0.4
Alaska	166	8.1	50	42	2.0	100	4.9	17	0.8**
Arizona	615	3.4	24	317	1.8	254	1.4	15	0.1**
Arkansas	363	4.6	40	168	2.1	154	2.0	31	0.4
California	2,977	2.9	17	2,392	2.3	506	0.5	65	0.1
Colorado	426	3.1	19	153	1.1	252	1.8	16	0.1**
Connecticut	146	1.6	4	111	1.2	31	0.3	*	*
Delaware	91	3.9	34	71	3.1	20	0.9	*	*
District of Columbia	142	10.7	—	139	10.4	*	*	*	*
Florida	1,665	3.7	29	1,150	2.5	449	1.0	49	0.1
Georgia	1,104	4.0	36	715	2.6	327	1.2	49	0.2
Hawaii	18	0.5**	1	*	*	*	*	*	*
Idaho	177	3.7	30	20	0.4	138	2.9	17	0.4**
Illinois	1,690	5.0	43	1,412	4.2	229	0.7	32	0.1
Indiana	715	4.0	37	412	2.3	254	1.4	35	0.2
Iowa	193	2.4	11	49	0.6	131	1.6	*	*
Kansas	266	3.3	22	122	1.5	123	1.5	20	0.2
Kentucky	441	3.9	33	173	1.5	218	1.9	44	0.4
Louisiana	949	7.7	49	695	5.6	189	1.5	54	0.4
Maine	63	2.1	8	13	0.4**	48	1.6	*	*
Maryland	530	3.5	28	429	2.8	95	0.6	*	*
Massachusetts	199	1.2	2	163	1.0	34	0.2	*	*
Michigan	1,015	4.0	35	643	2.5	335	1.3	28	0.1
Minnesota	330	2.3	9	121	0.8	198	1.4	*	*
Mississippi	436	5.3	45	244	2.9	115	1.4	57	0.7
Missouri	864	5.5	47	549	3.5	263	1.7	42	0.3
Montana	140	5.6	48	19	0.8**	104	4.1	14	0.6**
Nebraska	142	2.7	15	65	1.3	69	1.3	*	*
Nevada	282	3.8	32	151	2.1	112	1.5	12	0.2**
New Hampshire	52	1.7	6	*	*	44	1.4	*	*
New Jersey	443	2.0	7	379	1.7	55	0.2	*	*
New Mexico	252	4.5	38	119	2.1	122	2.2	*	*
New York	787	1.6	5	587	1.2	181	0.4	13	0.0**
North Carolina	878	3.4	25	506	2.0	305	1.2	54	0.2
North Dakota	63	3.4	26	10	0.5**	45	2.5	*	*
Ohio	1,041	3.5	27	658	2.2	333	1.1	35	0.1
Oklahoma	508	4.8	42	245	2.3	233	2.2	24	0.2
Oregon	234	2.4	12	76	0.8	147	1.5	*	*
Pennsylvania	1,160	3.7	31	773	2.5	331	1.1	49	0.2
Rhode Island	32	1.3	3	24	0.9	*	*	*	*
South Carolina	557	4.6	39	307	2.5	187	1.5	57	0.5
South Dakota	77	3.3	23	15	0.6**	51	2.2	*	*
Tennessee	801	4.8	41	490	2.9	245	1.5	37	0.2
Texas	2,347	3.0	18	1,288	1.7	905	1.2	116	0.1
Utah	281	2.9	16	63	0.6	200	2.0	10	0.1**
Vermont	34	2.3	10	*	*	25	1.7	*	*
Virginia	652	3.1	21	360	1.7	255	1.2	29	0.1
Washington	463	2.6	13	197	1.1	246	1.4	12	0.1**
West Virginia	134	3.1	20	49	1.1	75	1.7	*	*
Wisconsin	402	2.7	14	171	1.2	215	1.5	13	0.1**
Wyoming	82	5.4	46	11	0.7**	66	4.4	*	*
U.S. Total	28,072	3.4	—	17,275	2.1	9,232	1.1	1,180	0.1

[^] Higher rank means a higher overall gun death rate. The District of Columbia is not included in the ranking.

* Denotes cases where the number of deaths was below 10 and the exact number was not released by the CDC to protect the anonymity of victims.

** The rate is unreliable because it is based on fewer than 20 deaths.

Note: Gun deaths include homicides, suicides, accidents and deaths of unknown or undetermined intent, but exclude gun deaths from legal intervention. Rates are per 100,000 children and teens per year and are not age-adjusted.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2017 on CDC WONDER Online Database. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html> on 8/8/2019. Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Table 6: Gun Injury Numbers and Rates per 100,000 Children and Teens by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2008-2017

Gun Injury Numbers and Rates by Age, 2008-2017

	TOTAL		Under 5		Ages 5-9		Ages 10-14		Ages 15-19	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2008	20,596	24.8	238	1.2	369	1.9	1,170	5.7	18,818	84.7
2009	13,791	16.6	149	0.7	91	0.5	618	3.0	12,932	58.3
2010	15,576	18.7	201	1.0	240	1.2	1,265	6.1	13,871	62.9
2011	16,676	20.1	287	1.4	621	3.1	918	4.4	14,849	68.5
2012	12,715	15.4	119	0.6	275	1.3	906	4.4	11,415	53.4
2013	15,045	18.3	282	1.4	142	0.7	788	3.8	13,834	65.3
2014	13,463	16.4	129	0.6	334	1.6	1,436	6.9	11,564	54.9
2015	13,603	16.6	307	1.5	124	0.6	1,012	4.9	12,160	57.7
2016	17,155	20.9	153	0.8	255	1.2	948	4.6	15,799	74.8
2017	18,201	22.2	442	2.2	406	2.0	748	3.6	16,606	78.6

Gun Injury Numbers and Rates by Race/Ethnicity*, 2008-2017

	TOTAL		Black		White		Hispanic		Other non-Hispanic	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2008	20,596	24.8	8,441	61.2	4,085	8.6	5,099	29.9	578	11.7
2009	13,791	16.6	7,102	51.2	2,369	5.1	2,546	14.5	186	3.7
2010	15,576	18.7	7,232	52.1	2,839	6.1	3,571	20.0	349	6.9
2011	16,676	20.1	7,678	55.6	2,479	5.4	3,726	20.6	312	6.1
2012	12,715	15.4	4,823	35.1	1,799	4.0	2,298	12.6	454	8.7
2013	15,045	18.3	6,208	45.4	2,150	4.8	2,376	12.9	637	12.1
2014	13,463	16.4	5,721	41.9	3,062	6.9	763	4.1	55	1.0
2015	13,603	16.6	5,338	39.0	2,495	5.6	687	3.7	202	3.7
2016	17,155	20.9	6,698	48.8	3,093	7.0	1,062	5.6	90	1.6
2017	18,201	22.2	6,096	44.4	4,272	9.8	1,995	10.4	472	8.4

*Racial and ethnic categories are mutually exclusive: White, non-Hispanic; Black (including Hispanic and non-Hispanic); Hispanic (for all races other than Black); Other non-Hispanic, and Not Stated. The total number of injuries includes children and teens who did not state their race/ethnicity, thereby exceeding the sum of the other columns.

Note: Numbers may not add up to the totals due to rounding. Injuries from legal intervention are excluded.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nonfatal Injury Reports 2000-2017. Accessed using the Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/nonfatal.html>. Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Table 7: Gun Injury Numbers and Rates per 100,000, by Manner and Race/Ethnicity*, 2008–2017

Assault Gun Injuries

Year	Total		Black		White, non-Hispanic		Hispanic		Other	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2008	16,187	19.5	7,624	55.3	2,103	4.4	3,935	23.1	570	11.6
2009	10,038	12.1	5,847	42.2	764	1.6	2,068	11.8	178	3.5
2010	12,077*	14.5	6,602	47.6	681	1.5	3,246	18.2	257	5.0
2011	13,673*	16.5	6,983	50.6	1,166	2.5	3,277	18.1	32	0.6
2012	9,698	11.8	4,264	31.0	577	1.3	1,793	9.8	366	7.0
2013	11,613	14.1	5,520	40.3	562	1.3	2,149	11.7	324	6.1
2014	10,923*	13.3	5,272	38.6	1,453	3.3	741	4.0	31	0.6
2015	10,701*	13.0	4,790	35.0	1,023	2.3	640	3.4	8	0.1
2016	13,997	17.0	6,241	45.5	1,258	2.9	780	4.1	90	1.6
2017	15,141	18.4	5,470	39.8	2,436	5.6	1,865	9.7	346	6.2

Accidental Gun Injuries

Year	Total		Black		White		Hispanic		Other	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2008	3,998	4.8	796	5.8	1,698	3.6	1,058	6.2	8	0.2
2009	3,588	4.3	1,255	9.0	1,597	3.4	351	2.0	0	0.0
2010	3,019	3.6	630	4.5	1,702	3.7	302	1.7	92	1.8
2011	2,886	3.5	695	5.0	1,196	2.6	449	2.5	280	5.4
2012	2,683*	3.3	471	3.4	1,022	2.3	505	2.8	88	1.7
2013	3,127	3.8	688	5.0	1,352	3.0	227	1.2	313	5.9
2014	2,315	2.8	449	3.3	1,473	3.3	22	0.1	24	0.4
2015	2,724	3.3	527	3.9	1,340	3.0	47	0.3	194	3.6
2016	2,811*	3.4	451	3.3	1,662	3.8	198	1.0	0	0.0
2017	2,696*	3.3	577	4.2	1,528	3.5	124	0.6	126	2.2

Self-Harm Gun Injuries

Year	Total		Black		White		Hispanic		Other	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2008	411*	0.5	21	0.2	284	0.6	106	0.6	0	0.0
2009	165*	0.2	0	0.0	8	0.0	127	0.7	8	0.2
2010	480*	0.6	0	0.0	456	1.0	23	0.1	0	0.0
2011	117*	0.1	0	0.0	117	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
2012	334*	0.4	88	0.6	200	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
2013	305*	0.4	0	0.0	236	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
2014	225*	0.3	0	0.0	136	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
2015	178*	0.2	21	0.2	132	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
2016	347*	0.4	6	0.0	173	0.4	84	0.4	0	0.0
2017	364*	0.4	49	0.4	308	0.7	6	0.0	0	0.0

*Injury estimate is unstable because of small sample size. Use with caution.

Note: Data accessed and analyzed in May 2019. Much of this data is no longer available due to changes in WISQARS reporting of non-fatal injury data. As of July 2019, nonfatal injury estimates were suppressed if an estimate was based on fewer than 20 cases (unweighted data); if an estimate was less than 1,200 (weighted data); or if an estimate's coefficient of variation (CV) exceeded 30 percent.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nonfatal Injury Reports 2000-2017. Accessed using the Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/nonfatal.html>. Calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Endnotes

BOX: Select Shootings Involving Children

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International Comparisons

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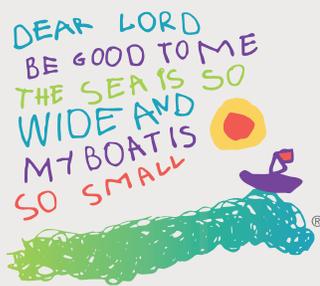
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