Child Access to Guns

- Gun violence is one of the top three causes of death in American youth.\(^i\)
  - **Child Gun-Related Deaths:**
    - According to the Children’s Defense Fund, 2,694 children and teens died from guns in the United States in 2010.\(^ii\)
      - 1,773 homicide gun deaths among children and teens
      - 749 suicide gun deaths
      - 134 accidental gun deaths
      - 38 deaths of undetermined intent.
    - 15,576 children and teens were injured by guns in 2010.\(^ii\)
    - In 2010, gun-related injuries caused 6570 deaths among youth 1 to 24 years old: 18 deaths a day.
    - In a 2009 study of injury deaths of kids ages 15 to 19—from homicide, suicide, and unintentional injury—more than 1 in 4 were gun related;
      - For children younger than 20, nearly 1 in 5 deaths were gun related.\(^iii\)
  - **Children, Guns, and Suicide:** Suicide is a leading cause of death for kids ages 15-19; guns are the most common method used.\(^iv\)
    - Firearm availability plays a large role in increasing risk.\(^v\) The odds are particularly high if the gun stored at home is kept loaded and/or unlocked.\(^vi\)
    - More than half of youth who commit suicide with a gun obtained the gun from their home, usually a parent's gun.\(^vii\)\(^viii\)
    - Of all methods used for attempting suicide, firearms are the most lethal, with an approximate 90% mortality rate.\(^ix\)

- How do children gain access to firearms?
  - **Guns in the Home:** Children obtain guns most often from within their own homes.\(^x\)
    - In fact, of 37 school shootings in 26 states, the attacker got the gun from his or her own home or that of a relative more than 65% of the time.\(^xi\)

- Presence of firearms in homes with children:
  - **Homes with Loaded and Unlocked Guns:** One third of US households with children under the age of 18 contain firearms.\(^xii\)
    - Nearly 2 million of these children live in homes where guns are kept loaded and/or unlocked.\(^xiii\)
    - One fifth of gun owners with children under 18 store a gun loaded; more than one third store one unlocked; nearly 1 in 10 store a gun loaded and unlocked.\(^xiv\)
In homes with adolescents ages 13-17, firearms were left unlocked 41% of the time.\textsuperscript{xv}

Research cited in a 2013 Children’s Defense Fund report\textsuperscript{xvi} found:

- Over 40\% of gun-owning households with children store their guns unlocked.\textsuperscript{xvii}
- 22\% of children with gun-owning parents handled guns in their homes without their parents’ knowledge.\textsuperscript{xviii}
- A study by the Harvard Injury Control Research Center found that 39\% of children interviewed knew the location of their parents’ guns and 22\% said they had handled the guns despite their parents reporting otherwise.\textsuperscript{xix}

- **Guns in the home increase risk of homicide**: A gun in the home makes the likelihood of homicide 3 times higher.\textsuperscript{xx} and suicide 3-5 times higher.\textsuperscript{xxi}
- **Keeping unlocked weapons at home increases the risk of accidental gun injuries**: A gun in the home makes the likelihood of accidental death 4 times higher.\textsuperscript{xxii}
  - In one study, more than half of unintentional firearm deaths occurred while children played with a loaded gun.\textsuperscript{xxiii}
  - In nearly half of cases, the shootings occurred in the home of the victim.\textsuperscript{xxiv}
  - More than 90\% of the time, there was no adult present.\textsuperscript{xxv}

- **Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home**:
  - **Keep Guns Locked and Unloaded**: Keeping guns locked and unloaded, and storing guns separate from ammunition has protective effects of better than 70\%.\textsuperscript{xxvi}
    - The American Pediatric Society recommends the use of trigger locks, lock boxes, personalized safety mechanisms, and trigger pressures that are too high for young children.\textsuperscript{xxvii}

- **Marketing of Firearms to Children**:
  - **Guns Designed for Children**: The gun industry promotes the sale of child sized guns for kids.\textsuperscript{xxviii} Examples of such practices include:
    - Giving firearms, ammunition and cash to youth groups, such as Boy Scouts and 4-H clubs;
    - Marketing an affordable military-style rifle for “junior shooters” and sponsoring semiautomatic-handgun youth competitions.\textsuperscript{xxix}
    - The NRA 2013 Annual Meeting included a “Youth Day,” on-premises sale of weapons marketed for kids, and an official NRA youth magazine.
  - **Marketing guns to children has deadly consequences**:
    - Among recent examples, is the heart-breaking accidental shooting of a 2 year old girl by her 5 year old brother as he played with his child-sized rifle, a gun marketed with the slogan “My First Rifle,” and sold by major retailers.

- **Legislation to Prevent Child Gun Deaths in the Home**:
  - **Lack of Child Access Prevention Laws**: There are currently no child access prevention laws at the federal level or in New York State.
- **Child access prevention (CAP) laws:** impose criminal liability on adults who negligently leave firearms accessible to children or otherwise allow children access to firearms.

- **CAP laws save lives:** Research shows that CAP laws reduce accidental shootings of children by as much as 23 percent and they reduce suicides of adolescents by 8 percent.

- **New State Laws Needed:**
  - **New York Children Killed with Guns:** 1,192 children and teens in New York were killed with guns from 2000-2010.
    - In 2010 alone, 116 New York children and teens were killed with guns.
  - **Proposed Child Access Prevention Legislation:** NYAGV is working to enact new gun safety laws in New York State that require child access prevention (CAP) and safe storage of firearms.
    - NYAGV supports New York Assembly bill A-03941, the Children’s Weapon Accident Prevention Act, which “creates crimes of failure to store a weapon safely in the first and second degrees, aggravated failure to store a weapon, and criminally negligent storage of a weapon in the first and second degrees and directs the commissioner of education to develop a weapons safety program.”

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3. Ibid
4. Ibid
15. WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System). Atlanta, see above


Ibid

Ibid


Ibid
