

# CHILDREN AND GUNS IN AMERICA

A generation of young people is all too familiar with the devastation wrought by gun violence. **Each year, thousands of futures are erased by bullets and thousands more are derailed by injury.** Three million American children are exposed to gun violence annually and forced to cope with lifelong trauma. However, solutions that protect kids from gun violence exist—we just need the courage to implement them.



**22 CHILDREN  
ARE SHOT IN  
AMERICA  
EVERY DAY<sup>1</sup>**

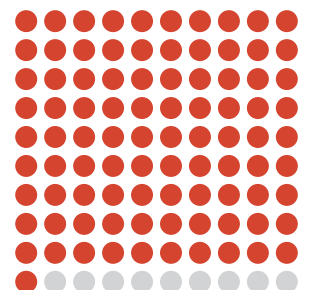
**3 MILLION  
CHILDREN  
ARE DIRECTLY  
EXPOSED TO  
GUN VIOLENCE  
EACH YEAR<sup>2</sup>**

#### DEADLY & COMMON

Guns are the third-leading cause of death for American children ages 1–17.<sup>3</sup>

- NO. 1 MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS
- NO. 2 CANCER
- NO. 3 FIREARM INJURIES**
- NO. 4 SUFFOCATION
- NO. 5 CONGENITAL ABNORMALITIES
- NO. 6 DROWNING
- NO. 7 HEART DISEASE
- NO. 8 POISONING
- NO. 9 FIRE AND BURN INJURIES
- NO. 10 RESPIRATORY DISEASES

**91% OF CHILDREN  
KILLED BY GUNS  
IN HIGH-INCOME  
COUNTRIES ARE  
KILLED IN THE US<sup>4</sup>**



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## Gun Violence's Lasting Impact on Children

Although school shootings devastate our nation and bewilder our collective consciousness, they comprise only a fraction of the gun violence affecting America's youth. Every day, children and teens fall victim to gun violence in their homes and communities.

### SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

During the 2017–18 school year, the US averaged more than one school shooting per week.<sup>5</sup> Given the alarming frequency of these tragedies, it's not surprising that **nearly 60% of American teenagers say they are worried about a shooting happening at their school.**<sup>6</sup> However, the risk of gun violence in schools is not evenly distributed. Nearly two-thirds of students exposed to school gun violence are children of color.<sup>7</sup>

### URBAN GUN VIOLENCE

For children growing up in underserved communities of color in American cities, gun violence can be a daily and even hourly occurrence. At least 40% of children in high-violence urban neighborhoods have witnessed a shooting,<sup>8</sup> and **black children are 10 times more likely than white children to be fatally shot by a gun.**<sup>9</sup> The persistent threat of gun violence also contributes to elevated rates of PTSD among children in these high-violence neighborhoods.<sup>10</sup>

### UNINTENTIONAL SHOOTINGS AND YOUTH SUICIDES

**Nearly 4.6 million children live in homes with loaded, unlocked firearms.**<sup>11</sup> And most children know where their parents keep their guns, even if their parents think otherwise.<sup>12</sup> Unsecured guns pose a clear risk to the safety of children. Many of the guns children use in unintentional shootings, teen suicides, and school shootings are taken from their home or the home of a relative or a friend.

## Solutions to Keep Kids Safe

No child in any community should live in fear of a shooting in their school, neighborhood, or home. Fortunately, there are simple steps we can take to protect our kids from gun violence.

- **Extreme risk protection order laws** allow family members and law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily disarm individuals at elevated risk of perpetrating gun violence, including school shootings or suicide.
- **Invest in urban violence prevention and intervention programs** that help interrupt the cycle of violence that plagues kids in underserved urban communities. In some cities, these programs have reduced shootings by over 70%.<sup>13</sup>
- **Prevent children from accessing guns** by enacting laws that require safe storage and encouraging the development of gun safety technology, like fingerprint trigger locks and biometric gun safes. Making it harder for children to get their hands on adults' guns helps prevent unintentional shootings, teen suicides, and school shootings.

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For more details and underlying research, visit [giffordslawcenter.org/protecting-kids](https://giffordslawcenter.org/protecting-kids)

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## 280+

lifesaving gun safety laws have been enacted in 45 states and DC since the tragedy at Sandy Hook.<sup>14</sup>

## 125,000

Americans are shot each year—over one million in the past decade.<sup>15</sup>

## 25x

Americans are 25 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than people in other developed nations.<sup>16</sup>

## WE'RE ON A MISSION TO SAVE LIVES

For 25 years, the legal experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence. Founded in the wake of a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco, in 2016 the Law Center joined with former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to form a courageous new force for gun safety that stretches coast to coast.

### CONTACT US

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**CHILDREN AND GUNS IN AMERICA CITATIONS**

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4. *Id.*
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