



Facts and Resources on Child Firearm Suicide

Gun violence has a devastating impact on children in America. **In fact, one-third of child gun deaths are suicides**—more than 700 child gun suicides each year.¹ One study showed that over 80 percent of children under the age of 18 who died by gun suicide used a gun belonging to a parent or relative.² For people of all ages, access to a gun increases the risk of death by suicide by three times.³

Most people who attempt suicide do not die—unless they use a gun.⁴ In fact, 90 percent of suicide attempts with a gun result in death—a much higher fatality rate than any other means of self-harm.⁵ This contributes to the fact that 43 percent of child suicides involve a gun.⁶

A national survey of high school students found that 22 percent had seriously considered attempting suicide within the last year.⁷ And one study showed that 41 percent of adolescents in gun-owning households report having “easy access” to the guns in their home.⁸

Signs to look out for when concerned that a loved one may be suicidal:⁹

- Prolonged sadness and depression
- Changes in mood or behavior
- Hopelessness
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Withdrawing/Isolation
- Aggression or agitation
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Talking about killing themselves

Research shows that secure firearm storage is associated with a decreased risk of child firearm suicide. One study showed that households that locked both firearms and ammunition had a 78 percent lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries among children and teenagers.¹⁰

Some additional key steps you can take to support your loved one include: inviting an honest conversation, listening and supporting your loved one, and encouraging them to see a mental health professional or a primary care physician.¹¹

Resources

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can be reached by calling or texting 988 or chatting on <http://988lifeline.org>.

Trevor Project, the LGBTQ youth suicide prevention line

Call TrevorLifeline at 1-866-488-7386.

Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime, about any type of crisis.



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. Average: 2018–2022. Ages 0 to 17.

² Renee M. Johnson et al., "Who Are the Owners of Firearms Used in Adolescent Suicides?" *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 40, no. 6 (2010): 609–11.

³ Andrew Anglemyer, Tara Horvath, and George Rutherford, "The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 160, no. 2 (2014): 101–10.

⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Firearm Suicide in the United States," December 28, 2021, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/firearm-suicide-in-the-united-states/>.

⁵ Andrew Conner, Deborah Azrael, and Matthew Miller, "Suicide Case-Fatality Rates in the United States, 2007 to 2014: A Nationwide Population-Based Study," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 171, no. 2 (2019): 885–95.

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. Average: 2018–2022. Ages 0 to 17.

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Data Summary & Trends Report, 2011–2021," 2023, <https://bit.ly/3TG6ncd>.

⁸ Joseph A. Simonetti et al., "Psychiatric Comorbidity, Suicidality, and In-Home Firearm Access Among a Nationally Representative Sample of Adolescents," *JAMA Psychiatry* 72, no. 2 (2015): 152–59.

⁹ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "Risk Factors, Protective Factors, and Warning Signs," (2022), <https://afsp.org/risk-factors-protective-factors-and-warning-signs>.

¹⁰ David C. Grossman et al., "Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Injuries," *JAMA* 293, no. 6 (2005): 707–14.

¹¹ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "When Someone is at Risk," (2022), <https://afsp.org/when-someone-is-at-risk>.