Facts and Resources on Child Firearm Suicide

Gun violence has a devastating impact on children in America. **In fact, 3 out of 10 child gun deaths are suicides**—more than 700 child gun suicides each year.[1] One study showed that nearly 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 45 percent of child suicides involve a gun.[6]

A national survey of high school students found that 1 in 5 students 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 https://chat.988lifeline.org/.

Trevor Project, the LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention line
Call TrevorLifeline at 1-866-488-7386, text START to 678678, or chat online at chat.trvr.org.

Crisis Text Line can be reached by texting HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime, about any type of crisis.

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[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. Average: 2020–2024. Ages 0 to 17.
[2] Catherine Barber et al., "Who Owned the Gun in Firearm Suicides of Men, Women, and Youth in Five US States?" *Preventive Medicine* 164 (2022): 107066, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2022.107066.
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[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: 2020–2024. Ages 0 to 17.
[7] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Data Summary & Trends Report, 2013–2023," US Department of Health and Human Services, 2024, https://www.cdc.gov/yrbs/dstr/pdf/YRBS-2023-Data-Summary-Trend-Report.pdf.
[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.

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