Firearm Injury Prevention for Young Children and their Families

Young Children and Their Families

- Why am I here today?
- Child Development
- How to discuss safe and secure firearms with families and children under 5
- Resources – What is happening?
- Who You Might Partner with?

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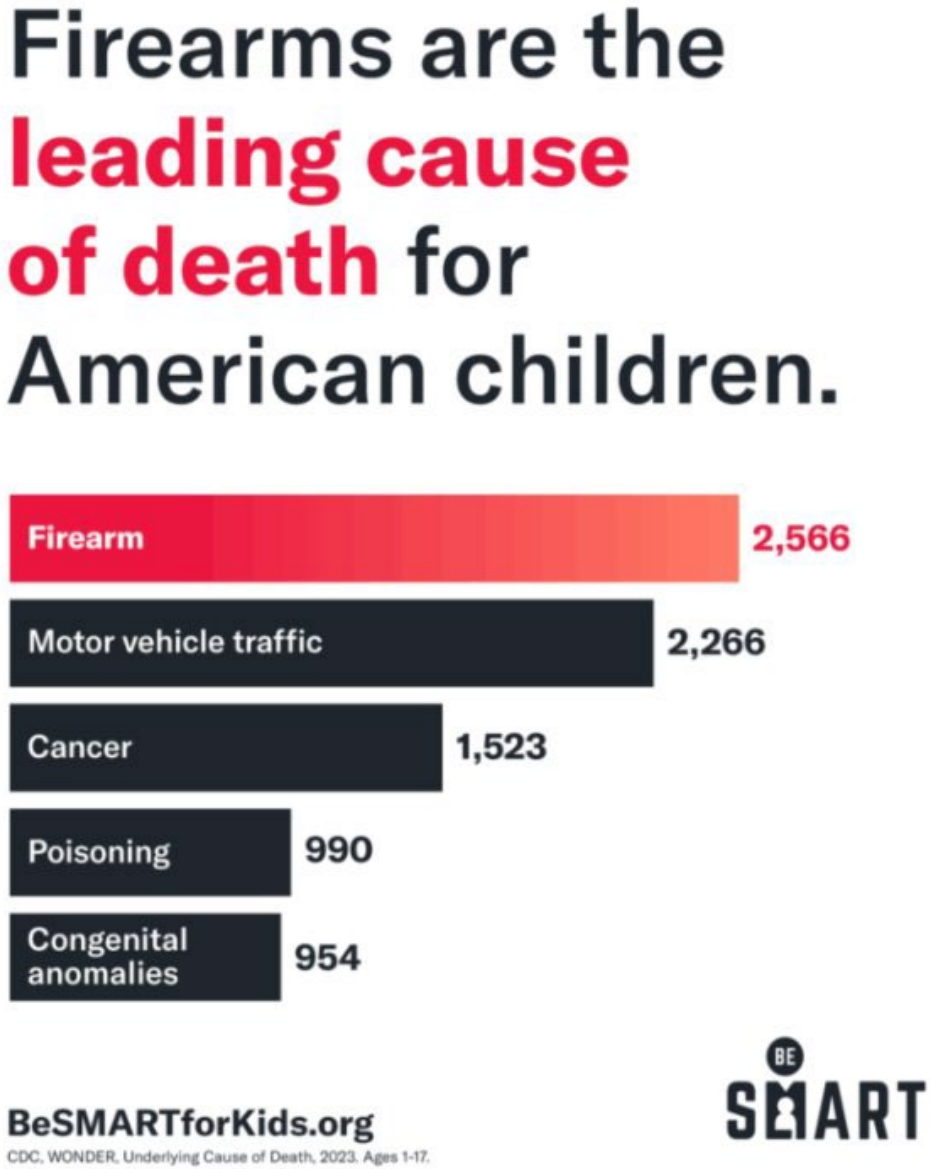
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WHY FIREARM INJURY PREVENTION?

At-Home Risk: About one-third of children in the U.S. live in homes with firearms. Alarmingly, over half of these guns are not locked. Most teen suicides that involved a firearm were carried out with guns belonging to family members. *Simple safety steps—like securely storing firearms—save lives.*

Alabama's Reality: In Alabama, guns are the top cause of death among children and teens, with about 113 lives lost each year. Most of these tragedies are due to suicide or homicide, often happening at home—sometimes by accident.

THE ISSUE


Firearms are the leading cause of death for American children.
Firearm
2,566
Motor vehicle traffic
2,266
Cancer
1,523
Poisoning
990
Congenital anomalies
954
BeSMARTforKids.org
CDC, WONDER, Underlying Cause of Death, 2023. Ages 1-17.
BE SMART

Key Concept: Risk Changes Throughout a Child's Development

Age	At Risk
Toddler	Finds
Preschool	Plays
Early School-Age	Tests
Older School-Age	Shows



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Developmental Changes During Childhood



FINDS

Access without understanding

PLAYS

Imitation & Pretend

TESTS

Breaks Rules

SHOWS

Peers & Dares

INFANTS (6–18 months) = “FINDS” STAGE

What changes at mobility

- Can reach
- Can grasp
- Cannot understand risk

Counseling goal

- We ask about exposure, not ownership.
- It is all about safety and not shame.

Intervention

- Remove access = prevent injury
- Locked. Unloaded. Separate ammo.

Toddlers can’t defeat safes.

They <u>can</u> defeat nightstands!

EARLY SCHOOL-AGE (5–7 yrs) = RULE TESTING

The myth

- “My child knows not to touch it”

Why they still touch it

- Curiosity
- Overconfidence
- Forbidden object = irresistible

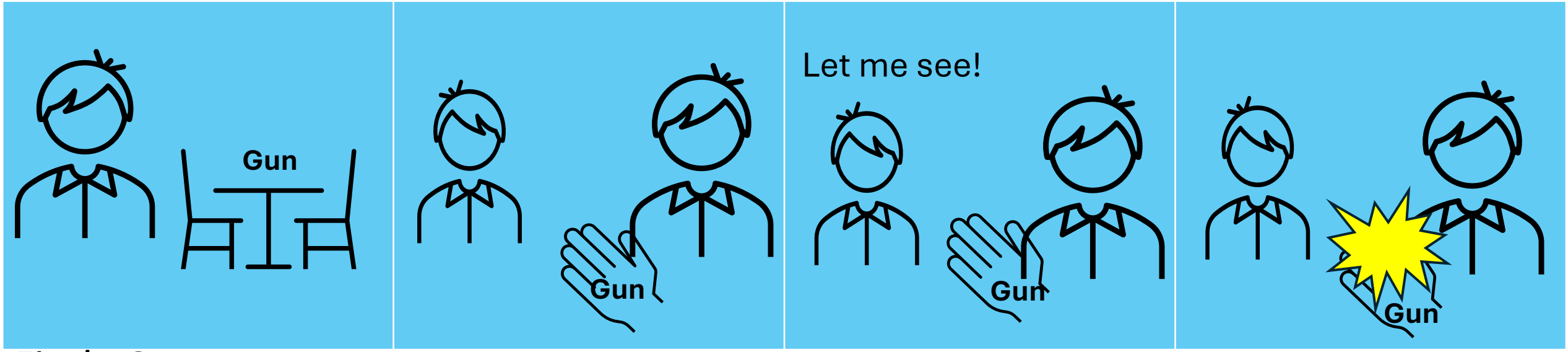
Kids believe safety rules apply to other kids. Not them!

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Jen

What actually happens when children find a gun?



Finds Gun on Table

Curiosity Becomes Shared

Escalation

Impulsive Moment

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Firearm Safety for Families



Studies show children are naturally curious, even about a firearm they've been warned not to touch.



Kids are <u>safer</u> when:
Firearms are in a lockbox or safe, unloaded. Ammunition is locked away separately.



Kids are <u>safest</u> when:
firearms are stored outside the home.

healthychildren.org
Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.
from the American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

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How to Talk to Young Children about Firearms

- Make it part of the normal safety conversation you have with your children.
- Keep the language simple; for example: “If you see a gun, don’t touch it. Tell an adult right away.”
- Tell children not to touch a gun, even if it looks like a toy.
- Assure children they will not get in trouble if they tell an adult they’ve seen a gun.
- Repeat it on a regular basis

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What's Happening?

- Jefferson County Department of Health
- Be SMART
- Children's of Alabama
- Veteran Administration Suicide Prevention
- Safety Initiatives
- ACHIA – Quality Improvement Initiative
- Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

What is in Your Packet?

- Talking to Your Kids About Guns
- Tennessee How to Cable Gun Lock
- Be SMART Facts and Resources
- Gun Violence in Alabama Fact Sheet

Other resources:

- https://projectchildsafe.org/educational-materials/

A video by your Project Child Safe for Young Children

Great website by American Academy of Pediatrics

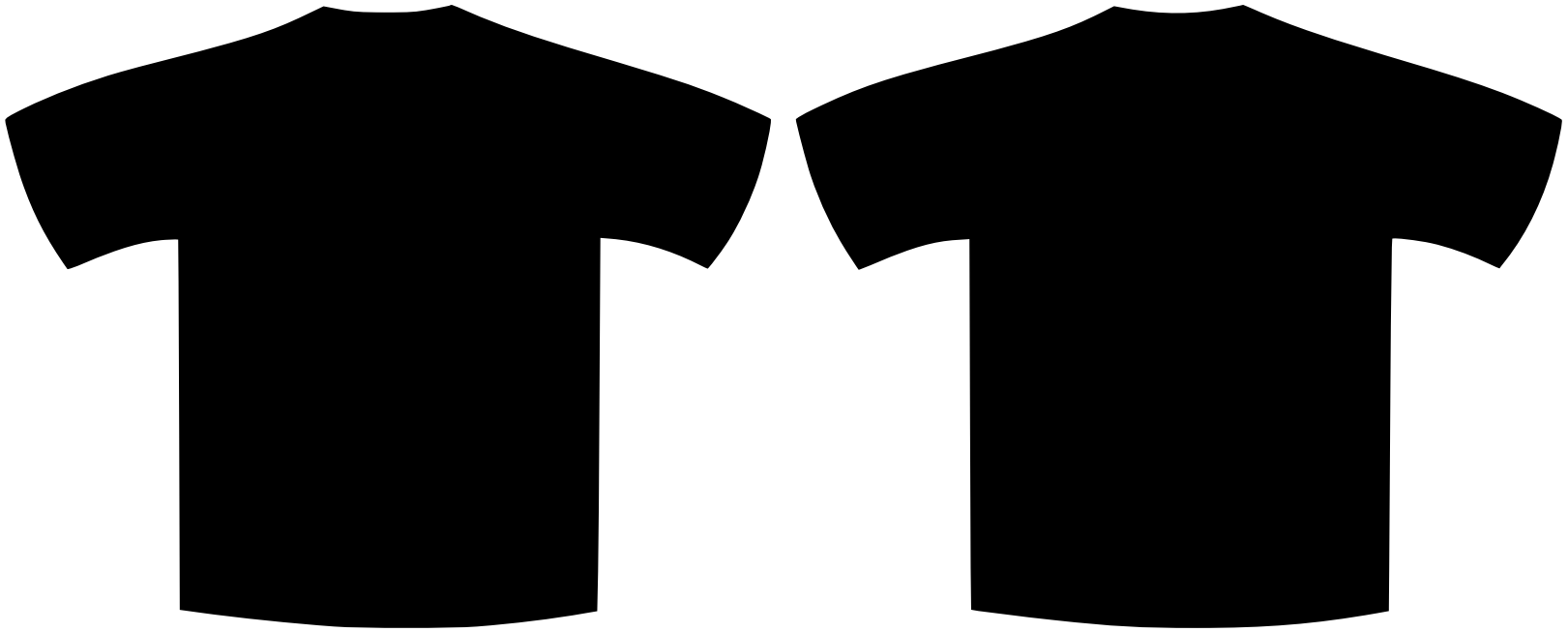
- Www.healthychildren.org

- Sign up on the sheet with your zip code
- Free cable gun lock for you!
- Thanks to the Jefferson County Dept of Health

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Door Prize (if I did not forget)



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