



Facts and Resources on Child Firearm Suicide

Gun violence has a devastating impact on American children. **Nearly 40 percent of child gun deaths are suicides** — almost 600 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, 85 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 40 percent of child suicides involve a gun.⁶

A national survey of high school students found that 17 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 responsible 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

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports. A yearly average was developed using five years of most recent available data: 2013 to 2017. Children aged 0 to 17.

² Johnson RM, Barber C, Azrael D, Clark DE, Hemenway D. Who are the owners of firearms used in adolescent suicides? *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*. 2010; 40(6): 609-611.

³ Anglemeyer A, Horvath T, Rutherford G. The accessibility of firearms and risk for suicide and homicide victimization among household members: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2014; 160: 101-110.

⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety, *Disrupting Access: Addressing Firearm Suicide in the U.S.* 2018 can be viewed at <https://every.tw/2N7oiq3>.

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⁷ Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional firearm injuries. *JAMA*. 2005;293(6):707-714.

⁸ Simonetti JA, Mackelprang JL, Rowhani-Rahbar A, Zatzick D, Rivara FP. Psychiatric comorbidity, suicidality, and in-home firearm access among a nationally representative sample of adolescents. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2015; 72(2):152-159.

⁹ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Risk Factors and Warning Signs. <https://bit.ly/2bmWnOx>.

¹⁰ Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional injuries. *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2005; 293(6): 707-714.

¹¹ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, When Someone is at Risk. <https://bit.ly/2rIVdir>.



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call 1-800-273-8255. Available 24 hours a day.

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.