

Protecting Your Children from Gun Violence

In 2005 approximately every week one North Carolina child was killed by a gun in a homicide, suicide, or unintentional shooting. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that the best way to prevent gun-related injuries and deaths is to remove guns from homes. However, each family should make their choices whether or not to own a gun for hunting, protection or other purposes. Even if you do not own a gun there may be a gun at the homes your children play in or stay. As a parent there are steps you can take to protect your child from being injured or killed by a firearm. Please read below for more information.

If You Have a Gun in Your Home . .

Nearly all childhood unintentional shooting deaths occur in or around the home or the home of a friend or relative. If you keep a gun for self-protection, take action to protect your children from your gun.

- ✓ Store your unloaded gun in a sturdy lock box preferably with a combination or fingerprint lock
- ✓ Store bullets and other ammunition in a separate location from your gun(s)
- ✓ Talk to and warn your children about the dangers of guns and tell them they should never touch guns. Let children know that if they see a gun they should report it immediately to an adult
- ✓ REMEMBER: Children are curious by nature and will search within their environments and test their limits. Studies have found that children will touch and play with guns if they are within reach.

Are There Guns Where Your Children Play?

A University of North Carolina hospital study found that 36% of gun owners with young children reported keeping their firearms loaded and about 50% failed to lock their weapons in a safe storage box.

- ✓ Before letting your children play at another child's house ask their parents if they have a gun in the home
- ✓ Ask parents if their gun is stored safely away from children--- hiding guns is not enough, gun should be unloaded and locked up.
- ✓ If you feel that the situation is unsafe for your children invite children to your home instead

How Can Parents Prevent School Shootings?

Recent tragedies have taught parents about the dangers of guns at schools and public places. Studies show that in 4 out of 5 school shootings, the attackers told other students about their plans.

- ✓ Talk with your children about the importance of "Speaking Up" if they see a weapon at school or hear of someone bringing a weapon to school.
- ✓ Make sure your children understand that reporting can prevent a tragedy at their school. Children often feel disloyal if they "snitch on" other children.
- ✓ Make sure your children know not to attempt to handle the situation themselves.
- ✓ Let your children know that a gun or a threat of violence is NEVER a joke.

North Carolinians Against Gun Violence (NCGV)

January 18, 2008

websafe@ncgv.org

Protecting Your Children from Gun Violence

You Do So Much to Protect Your Children. . .

As parents you feed your children healthy meals, cover electrical outlets, make sure your children wear helmets while riding a bike, talk to your children about not smoking, the list goes on and on. However all too often parents do not consider the real threat posed by guns. Every year almost 20,000 children are killed or injured by a firearm and yet 3/4 of parents believe their kids would leave a real gun alone or would tell an adult. When considering whether or not you should talk to your children about gun safety, consider this:

In a study of 64 boys ages 8-12 conducted by Emory University and Pennsylvania University when small groups of the boys (2-3) were lead into a room with toys, told they could leave at any time if they had questions or problems and that they could play with toys on a counter, no mention of whether they could open cabinets was made, toy and real guns were hidden in drawers. Here are some shocking results of the study:

- ✓ 3/4 of the boys found the real gun
- ✓ Only 1 group of boys left the room after finding the gun
- ✓ 3/4 of the boys in a group handled the gun
- ✓ Nearly half of the boys in a group pulled the trigger
- ✓ Nearly 40% of boys from gun-owning families handled and pulled the trigger.
- ✓ Half the boys thought the real gun was a toy or were unsure
- ✓ Over 90% of the boys who handled the real gun had gun safety previously taught
- ✓ 64% of parents thought their boys had a low interest in guns

If you need help talking to your children or other adults about gun safety and preventing gun violence contact North Carolinians Against Gun Violence (NCGV) at websafe@ncgv.org or 919.403.7665