



# Shootings in America

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In 2009 in the U.S., the number of unintentional shootings that resulted in death was 554 persons per 100,000. Of this number, 69 per 100,000 children age 4-17 were killed by unintentional gunfire in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

In 2011, the rate for unintentional non-fatal firearm injuries in the country was 1,495 per 100,000 persons for children age 4-17.<sup>2</sup>

In 2010, the rate for children who had died as a result of unintentional gunfire was 81 per 100,000 for children age 4-17.<sup>3</sup>

Approximately 32.3% of American households have a gun.<sup>4</sup> In a survey of homes with children under the age of 18, 43% had at least one unlocked gun and 9% of these homes kept all their firearms unlocked, and in another 4% of the homes, at least one firearm is unlocked, unloaded, but stored with ammunition. Thus, in 13% of homes with guns and children, approximately 2.6 million children could gain access to a firearm.<sup>5</sup>

## GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA IS SOMETIMES CONSIDERED “FRIENDLY FIRE”

We have all seen them... headlines that read:

**“TEENAGER DIES AFTER ACCIDENTAL SHOOTING”,**  
**“YOUTH ACCIDENTALLY SHOOTS BROTHER”,**  
**“BOY ACCIDENTALLY SHOOTS SISTER”,**  
**“7-YEAR OLD ACCIDENTALLY SHOOTS NEIGHBOR”....and so on.**

Events such as these are the products of a “perfect storm” where the youth that gain access to an unsecured firearm may not be knowledgeable about how it operates and are, perhaps, not in the company of adults. Youth involved in accidental shootings are most likely to shoot someone they know or a relation. Researchers, Hemenway, Barber & Miller of the Harvard School of Public Health (2010)<sup>6</sup>, in a study on 363 unintentional firearm deaths, found that over half of the deaths were other-inflicted. Of these, the shooter was a friend with the victim in 43% of the cases. Moreover, 47% of the shooters were related to the victim. Even more

concerning is that one out of three of the shooters in the study was under the age of 15.

In order to prevent such tragedies, 35 states and at least 3 major cities have drafted and passed **Child Access Prevention (CAP)** laws. These laws require safe storage of firearms to limit access by children. While most of the states consider CAP violations as misdemeanors, a few states do cite violations of CAP laws as felonies. Research also indicates that CAP laws are most highly correlated with reductions of non-fatal gun injuries in the states where violations are considered felonies (Webster, 2000)<sup>7</sup>. Research also indicates that CAP laws are correlated with a reduction of non-fatal gun injuries among both children and adults by 30-40% (DeSimone, 2005)<sup>8</sup>. Not surprisingly, researchers, Hepburn, Azrael, Miller, et al. (2005)<sup>9</sup>, found a correlation between states that passed CAP laws and a decrease in unintentional firearm deaths among children age 0-14 in those states.

## America’s Gun Ownership

Research conducted by the Pew Research Center<sup>10</sup> indicates that in 2009, approximately 1/3 of all American households had a firearm. Additionally, over 15% of these households reported that they did not have their firearms locked up or otherwise secured, which includes 40% of households with children.

## Firearm Injury Prevention Programs

There is some concern that programs designed for youth and/or their parents, which attempt to teach gun injury prevention, are not successful. Researcher, M.S. Hardy (2007)<sup>11</sup> asserts that such programs may actually give the youth the impression that carrying a firearm is normal and/or increase the youth’s interest in using firearms. SOS has a program that has already demonstrated a difference in the thought processes of youth after they have been exposed to our program. See the back of this newsletter for specific comments made by participants in our program.

<sup>1</sup>National Vital Statistics Reports, 60(3): 81. 12/29/2011.

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System. Unintentional Firearm Gunshot Nonfatal Injuries and Rates per 100,000, 2011, U.S.

<sup>3</sup>Op cit. Unintentional Firearm Gunshot Nonfatal Injuries and Rates per 100,000, 2011, U.S. Ages 4-17.

<sup>4</sup>General Social Survey, 2010, pg. 2

<sup>5</sup>Schuster MA, Frank TM, Bastian AM, et al. Firearm Storage Patterns in U.S. Homes with Children. Am J Public Health 2000;90:588-594.

<sup>6</sup>Hemenway D, Barber C, Miller M. Unintentional firearm deaths: a comparison of other-inflicted and self-inflicted shootings. *Accid Anal Prev.* 2010 Jul;42(4):1184-8. Feb, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Webster, D.W., M. Stames (2000). "Reexamining the association between child access prevention gun laws and unintentional shooting deaths of children". *Pediatric* 106 (6): 1466-1469.

<sup>8</sup> DeSimone J, Markowitz S. The Effect of Child Access Prevention Laws on Non-Fatal Gun Injuries. NBER Working Paper No. 11613. 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Hepburn L, Azrael D, Miller M. et al The effects of child access prevention laws on unintentional child firearm fatalities, 1979-2000. *J Trauma* 2006. 61423-428.428.





Stop Our Shootings has a powerful school program that makes a strong impact on children, changing their attitudes about firearms and altering their fascination of guns. The results of the youths' surveys (see below) are also sent to their homes in an effort to educate the parents; which is the real source of the problem. The following table are the results of an anonymous survey of 102 youth ages 16-18. The questionnaires followed an SOS live presentation that included young victims of intentional and unintentional shootings.

Question	80 Boys		22 Girls	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Have you ever played with a real gun?	62%	38%	32%	68%
Do you play video games that shoot people?	86%	14%	68%	32%
Do your friends show you their mom or dad's guns?	24%	73%	9%	91%
Do you know someone who has been shot?	63%	36%	73%	27%
Did you know before today that a gun could look unloaded but still have a bullet in it?	84%	11%	86%	14%

The survey results from this particular presentation also revealed that **20% of the participants' parents who owned guns did not secure them** and **33% of the kids knew where the guns were stored**. Several comments made by the students who have sat through our presentation mentioned that parents should secure their guns to prevent shootings. Following is a sample of comments we received in letters from students from different schools after they participated in our presentations that give a snapshot of their overall attitude change regarding firearms.

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

**Your story has made a difference in my life and made me realized that I should always stay away from guns, loaded or unload... Brian C.** ☺ I'm sure you have changed the lives of many teens by sharing your story, because you changed my perspective.... **Danielle K.** ☺ **Meeting someone who has experienced a tragedy because of gun violence really helps me realize that things like this can happen to you when you least expect it and change your life forever.... Alina G.** ☺ My brother has a gun and I always thought that it was pretty cool. I now realize that it is not cool but, it is dangerous. Almost everyone in society today thinks that guns are cool but after listening to your story, I do not know how they could think that. I'm glad that you came to my class. It changed my mind about guns and it probably changed others ideas also.... **Brian W.** ☺ **I hope you know that you speaking in front of a class really helps me see how guns could really mess up your life.... Liz B.** ☺ I learned that guns are not cool and if you see a gun you should walk away from it. At home we have two handguns. At first I thought they were cool, but now I know they are dangerous. I think you should go around to other schools and tell the students to be gun free.... **Timmy C.** ☺ **My dad has a 9mm semi-automatic and I don't know how many kids know about it, but all of the young kids ask me to see it. I get so ticked off how they are so irresponsible. I tell them "No" and change the subject.... Scott S.** ☺ You have informed me thoroughly about the horrible affects of gun violence.... **Monique D.** ☺ **It was better to hear about a shooting firsthand from someone who was shot, than to just hear about it on the news when I normally would not pay any attention to it. Having you come to speak really made the situation sound more real and less far away, like it could not happen to me. What you have said has probably made a lot of kids think twice about touching or playing with a gun (even though you did not even touch the gun).... Georgette K.** ☺ My dad had two guns. I don't know many kids know about it, but I've had several kids ask me if they could see the guns. I always change the subject, but before I do, I always say, "Why would you want to put yourself at risk? I wouldn't want to do that to myself and my friend." By speaking out, you have probably prevented a lot of deaths.... **Alaina T.** ☺ **I have learned a lot from the information that you have taught me. I always thought that guns were a tool needed for any hero to have, but because of that day that you have spent with us, I have totally changed my beliefs.... Silas C.**

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

SOS is a nonprofit that relies on donations. Please consider helping us continue our mission by making a donation to our Foundation. Stop Our Shootings, 1803 So. Westgate, L.A., 90025. Tax ID 330886923.

