

The best way to protect children against gun violence is to have a “no guns” rule in your home.

If you keep guns, taking certain actions can lessen the dangers. **NEVER leave guns unattended.**

Store and lock guns and ammunition in separate containers in separate locations. Only you should know the locations and have the keys or combination. For a revolver, use a padlock to prevent the cylinder from closing from closing, or use a trigger lock. For a pistol, use a trigger lock.

If you need a gun lock, contact your worker to obtain a free Project ChildSafe gun lock.

To keep your children safe when they are not at home, talk with them about the risk of gun injury. Tell them to steer clear of guns. Speak with parents of your child’s friends to find out if they keep a gun. If they do, urge them to empty it and lock it up. You may even want to pass this brochure on to them.

Fact:
More teenagers die as a result of gunshot wounds than from all natural causes combined.

What you can do and teach at home

What children learn at home is carried with them for the rest of their lives. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following age appropriate interventions at home to help prevent youth violence (adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics by the Child Health Data Lab, Children’s Memorial Hospital):

Category	Infancy/Early Childhood (0-2 years)	Preschool (3-5 years)	School Age (6-12 years)	Early Adolescence (13-16 years)
Early Nurturing	Nurture bonding and attachment	Nurture bonding and attachment	Encourage empathy skills	Encourage empathy skills
	Read to your child	Teach social skills	Help develop anger management skills	Help reinforce anger management skills
	Nurture healthy sibling friendships	Know normal age-appropriate behavior	Find opportunities for positive activities	Find opportunities for positive activities
	Spend time with children			
Limit Setting	Avoid corporal punishment			
	Employ age-appropriate disciplinary practices, including praise for positive behavior	Employ appropriate time-outs	Employ appropriate time-outs	Employ appropriate restrictions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving • Drugs • Curfews
	Praise positive behavior	Lay the foundation for family rules	Expand family rules	Acknowledge positive behavior
		Introduce responsibilities: putting dirty clothes in hamper, etc.	Include among responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School • Chores 	Include among responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School • Chores
Basic Safety	Make sure child is safe in high-quality child care	Make sure child is safe in high-quality child care	Make sure child is safe when traveling to and from school	Remind your child about safety
	Confront and get help for domestic violence			
	Make non-violent conflict resolution a habit			
	Do not keep firearms in the home. If you must own a gun, keep it stored safely – locked and unloaded, and keep ammunition locked up separately.			

Violence Prevention

As a parent, you want your child to grow up in a safe, loving environment. This brochure offers strategies that can be used to protect your child from violence.

Suitable Caregivers

When asking someone to watch your child, remember that not everyone is good—gentle and kind—with kids. Some may be good with ten-year-olds, but not with two-year-olds. Some may have an explosive temper or be resentful of a baby who cries, feeling that the baby is preventing them from doing the things they want to do.

Ask yourself:

- Does he want to watch your child?
- Have you watched her with your child?
- Has he done a good job of caring for other children that you know?
- Will she become angry if your child bothers her?
- Is he good with children your child's age?
- If she is angry, will she treat your child roughly?

- Does he have a history of violent behavior?
- Is she unable to care for her own children?
- Is the place he will care for your child safe?
- Does he single out a particular child for excessive punishment?

Managing Frustration

The least helpful way of handling your anger is to get so upset that you do things that you regret later.

- Make a plan for what to do when you get angry, such as walking away for a little while, doing some physical exercise, and/or calling a friend for help. Have the phone number of your friends or family available in case you need a break.
- When you begin to feel out of control, try to take a break from the situation. Ask someone to watch your child until you have calmed down.
- After you are calm, think about what happened and how you felt about it. Can you think of some different ways to handle this problem? Some people do this by themselves and others need to talk out problems with a friend. If the situation is really

difficult, it would probably be much better to talk to a wise friend or a counselor.

Your Partner

Any person you invite into your home will impact the life of your child.

Ask yourself – Do they:

- Enjoy spending time with you and your child?
- Say nice things about your child?
- Talk to your child in a respectful way?
- Know your child's daily activities?
- Provide attention to your child through positive words and actions?
- Listen to your child and respect his feelings?
- Understand what children can do at different ages?
- Use non-violent and non-physical discipline strategies?
- Make your child feel safe and secure?

If you are in a relationship with someone who is hurting you, there is a good chance that he or she may be hurting your child. If your child is being hurt, you may be in danger, too. To keep your

child safe, listen to her, even to unspoken words. Watch for unexplained or suspicious bruises or injuries or a marked change in your child, such as crying, fearful behavior or acting out.

Firearm Safety

Consider the facts:

- Eleven children are killed every day by a firearm.
- Fifty percent of all childhood unintentional shooting deaths occur in the home of the victim and nearly 40 percent occur in the home of a relative or friend.
- Three-year-old children have the coordination and strength to pull the trigger of many handguns.
- It is difficult for children under the age of eight to distinguish between real and toy guns.
- More teenagers die as a result of gunshot wounds than from all natural causes combined.

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