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Redefining Social Norms with Firearm Safety in Children: How Pediatric- focused APRNs can Influence Change

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Experts in pediatrics, Advocates for children. 1

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Speaker Disclosure

- I have no disclosures, financial or otherwise.




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Learning Objectives

- Increase the number of pediatric focused APRNs who feel comfortable and routinely ask about the presence of firearms where children live and play.
- Identify existing barriers in providing firearm safety education to families and communities and learn how to address these barriers.
- Recognize the dangers that unsafely stored firearms pose to children and their families.




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Learning Objectives

- Describe the impact that a 24-year blockade on firearm safety research has had on the pediatric population and understand how pediatric focused APRNs can influence change in community and family behaviors related to firearms.
- Identify how pediatric focused APRNs can effectively use a multifaceted approach to provide firearm safety education with families and within communities.



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It's the Guns

- Firearm Statistics
- Parental Misconceptions
- Best Practice
- Current Situation



(LWW, 2019)

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The cost of falling behind

- Dickey Amendment
- Impact of this funding freeze: Gun Violence –least researched cause of death (# 30) and least funded cause of death (# 29).



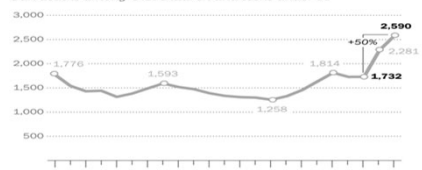
(Weir, 2021).

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Firearms # 1 cause of death (Pew research center, 2023).

Gun deaths among U.S. kids increased 50% between 2019 and 2021.

Gun deaths among U.S. children and teens under 18



Note: Includes homicides, suicides, accidents and all other categories of gun deaths.
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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AAP Council on Injury, Violence and Poison Prevention

- Understand the physical and mental health impact
- Harm Reduction has shown success with MVA's in youth
- Education including anticipatory guidance on risks
- Education on Safer firearm storage
- Community level interventions
- Activate safety regulations as the standard
- Legislation
- Funding

(Lee et al., 2022)

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Understand the physical and mental health impact

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)

- Where do we see the impact of firearm violence?
- Youth survivors: 68% increase in psychiatric disorders and 144% increase in substance abuse disorders (Song et al., 2023).

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ACE's and the stress response

- How are firearms related here?
- Safe places are a luxury and relative term
- Mental Health Impact
- Generational impact
- Buffering Resilience

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Harm Reduction

(Bulger et al., 2019)

	Host Factors	Agent Factors (Firearm)	Physical Environment	Social Environment
Pre-Injury: Before the gun is fired (Primary Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to mental health services • Screening to identify individuals at risk • Lethal means counseling • Education on physician burnout (for physician suicide prevention) • Substance abuse treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide safe storage devices/discontinue their use • Develop smart gun technology (gun can only be fired by authorized user/owner) • Store ammunition away from the firearm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme Risk Protection Orders: remove firearms from home • Lethal means safety: reduce home access to firearms • Provision of places for temporary storage of firearms outside of the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide hotlines • Community support system for individuals in crisis • Suicide prevention: messaging to firearm owners in the community • Education and tools to encourage physicians to counsel patients/families • Screening algorithms for suicidal ideation on social media • Waiting period for firearm purchase
Injury: When the gun is fired (Secondary Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the Blood: bystander training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify ammunition to it is less lethal e.g. smaller caliber ammunition • Smart gun technology: will not fire if pointed at foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alarm systems to call 911 when gunfire detected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family/community support to interrupt attempt
Post injury: After the victim is shot (Tertiary Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-injury access to mental health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma system development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support for survivors and families • Stop the Blood training in communities

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Access



- Pediatric-focused practitioners must know the biggest risk factor for firearm exposure is access to firearms (Roszko et al., 2016).
- Decreasing access to guns decreases gun related morbidity and mortality (Hemenway, D., 2022).

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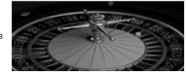
Education

- Anticipatory guidance on risks
- Safer firearm storage
- The impact that firearms have had and continue to have in our society.

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Miscalculated risk

Canva, 2023



- Using a hypothetical model, it is estimated that if all firearms were stored locked and unloaded that up to 32% of all firearms and deaths in children up to age 18 could be prevented (Monuteaux et al., 2019)
- The AAP recommends that all families receive education on safe firearm storage, yet in a survey of 922 pediatric providers, only 15% reported always screening for guns in the home, citing time as a barrier (Olson, 2007).
- A 2021 AAP project surveying caregivers, only 11% of caregivers reported their pediatric provider had inquired about firearm storage and or safety (AAP, 2021)

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Community Level Interventions

- Vast opportunities
- Polarizing topic
- Challenge assumptions
- Know your audience so we can bridge the gap



(FDA, 2023)

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How to ASK

- ★ Any guns in the home ?
- ★ If guns yes, are they stored locked up and unloaded with ammunition kept separately ?
- ★ Do you ask about the presence of guns before taking your child to an environment where the child plays such as a friend or family member's home ?
- ★ If you do ask about guns, do you also inquire if the gun is stored locked up and unloaded with ammunition kept separately ?
(AAP, 2020)

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ASK
ASKINGSAVEKIDS

Is There an Unlocked Gun Where Your Child Plays?

Childhood gun violence has become a leading cause of death for children in the United States. **3 years** may be the average life expectancy for a child who is shot.

87 children, ages 17 and younger, were injured or killed by guns in the United States in 2021.

GUN SAFETY and children
Almost 1/3 of the homes with children in the United States have a gun. Kids who don't have a gun should be taught how to respond.

The ASK Campaign has successfully inspired 19 million households to ASK if there are guns where their children play.

Resources: Project Child Safe: email to obtain a free gun lock pscinfo@nssf.org
For more information go to BradyUnited.org/ EndFamilyFire.org

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BE SMART

Secure all guns in your home and vehicles
Model responsible behavior around guns
Ask about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes
Recognize the role of guns in suicide
Tell your peers to be SMART

For more information on what you can do to keep kids safe, visit BeSmartForKids.org

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74 Million Reasons Why

- 4.6 million children in this country living with a loaded and unlocked firearm in their homes (Miller & Azrael, 2022)



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Legislation matters

- **ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN**
- **UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**
- **SECURE STORAGE LAW**
- **RED FLAG LAW**
- **INCREASED FUNDING FOR HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

(<https://www.theinfuturepac.org>, 2024)

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Connect with resources

- Child Health Advocacy Institute (CHAI)
<https://www.childrensnational.org/in-the-community/child-health-advocacy-institute>
- CHOP's Policy Lab
<https://policylab.chop.edu>
- Penn Injury Science Center
<https://www.penninjuryscience.org>
<https://www.everytown.org/solutions/responsible-gun-storage>

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Leaders on pediatric advocacy

- Safe Kids Worldwide
- Be SMART
- Leaders in the industry

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Their Future. Our Vote.

- The moment is now
- <https://www.theirfutureourvote.org/dr-annie-andrews>
- If not us, then who?
- Get off the sidelines and use your passion to create change that protects our children.

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Funding Opportunities

- NIH
- NRA
- NINR: R25
- CDC
- Collaborate with other hospitals and universities
- Gun lock giveaways: Safe Kids Worldwide Grant Funding

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Advocacy for Firearm Policy

- Collective unified multi-prong approach
- Work in tandem with other associations & grass root movements
 - American Academy of Pediatrics
 - Safer through advocacy, Firearm, Education, and Research (SAFER)
 - American College of Surgeons-STOP THE BLEED
 - Everytown for Gun Safety
- Know and engage with state and federal legislators
- Engage with your employer if policy competent
- Participate in social media initiatives
- Write an op-ed (www.theopedproject.org)
- Educate yourself

How will you influence change and redefine social norms with firearm safety in children ?

- Educational intervention helps to establish firearm safety education as a standard of care.
- Primary Care Prevention
- Anticipatory guidance from pediatric providers is critical with the potential impact to save lives.



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Questions?

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Thank you for your time and for advocating for our kids!