

# Protect Children, Not Guns 2007

A Children's Defense Fund Report

**E**ach and every day in America we continue to lose far too many children to gun violence in towns, cities and rural areas all across the United States. Data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveals that every day, nearly eight children or teens are killed by gun violence in America—235 each month.

In 2004 alone, the gun death toll for children and teens in the United States was 2,825, more than the total number of American service men and women who died in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan since those wars began in 2003 through December 2006. Even our youngest children were not exempt from gun violence. In 2004:

- 58 preschoolers were killed by firearms, while 57 law enforcement officers were killed in the line of duty.
- 60 percent of the children and teens killed were White; 37 percent were Black.
- White children and teens were nine times as likely to commit suicide by guns as Black children and teens. Black children and teens were more likely to be victims of firearm homicide.
- The firearm death rate for Black males ages 15 to 19 was almost four times that of White males the same age.
- Girls are not immune to gun violence. The number of girls killed by firearms increased from 325 in 2003 to 387 in 2004—a 19 percent increase, although males ages 15 to 19 were more than six times as likely as females that age to commit suicide with a firearm.
- In 2004, firearm deaths of children and teens went up more than 10 percent in seven states—Michigan, Colorado, Tennessee, Arizona, New Jersey, Massachusetts and the District of Columbia. They went down by more than 10 percent in four states—New York, North Carolina, Wisconsin and Arkansas.

Progress has been made over the years. Firearm deaths of children and teens have dropped from 15 a day in the peak year of 1994 to nearly eight a day in 2004. But eight children and teens dying each day is a moral outrage. Since 1979 gun violence has snuffed out the lives of **101,413 children and teens** in America:

- These 101,413 children and teens would fill 4,056 public school classrooms of 25 students each.
- 101,413 child and teen gun deaths is more than the total number of American fatalities in all wars since World War II ended including the Korean, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.
- The number of Black children and teens killed by gunfire is more than 10 times the number of Black citizens of all ages lynched throughout American history.

Many of these tragic deaths are invisible to the American public, although certainly not to their families, friends and communities. They rarely make newspaper headlines or garner national television coverage. It's time to change that reality.

**Gun violence affects everyone in America** and is a major public health problem. Among children and teens, for every gun death there are between four and five nonfatal injuries. According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the average cost per gunshot victim, excluding rehabilitative and long-term care, was \$45,000. In a single year gunshot injuries add up to \$2.3 billion in lifetime medical costs—about half of which is borne by taxpayers.

**What can be done?** There must be a movement to end gun violence in our country and stop the proliferation of guns. Let us build on the current initiative of more than 100 U.S. mayors who have called for national leadership to wage war on the gun violence that snuffs out the lives of so many in America.

- Congress must enact common sense gun safety measures including legislation that closes the gun show loophole, requiring criminal background checks on those purchasing guns from unlicensed dealers, and reinstatement of the 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban.
- Parents should remove guns from their homes; organize nonviolent conflict resolution support groups in their congregations and communities; and refuse to buy video games and other products for their children and teens that glamorize or make violence socially acceptable or fun.
- Community leaders must turn schools and places of worship into venues of quality summer and after-school programs for children as positive alternatives to the streets. They should also adopt proven programs that encourage collaboration among families, faith groups, social service providers and the police to stop gun violence against and by children and teens.

Americans must call for a national commitment against gun terrorism in America so that children can play in their yards and walk to school without fear. Thousands and thousands of children and teens cannot do that now. What is it going to take for us to stop the killing of children and the proliferation of guns, which leave every single American at risk?

**Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Age,  
Manner, and Race/Hispanic Origin, 2004**

	<i>Under age 1</i>	<i>Ages 1-4</i>	<i>Ages 5-9</i>	<i>Ages 10-14</i>	<i>Ages 15-19</i>	<i>Total under age 20</i>
<b>All races</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>2,467</b>	<b>2,825</b>
Accident	1	14	13	35	80	143
Suicide	0	0	0	59	787	846
Homicide	6	36	45	139	1,578	1,804
Undetermined intent	0	1	3	6	22	32
<b>White</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>1,365</b>	<b>1,568</b>
Accident	1	6	6	31	57	101
Suicide	0	0	0	49	676	725
Homicide	3	11	26	66	617	723
Undetermined intent	0	0	1	3	15	19
<b>Black</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1,014</b>	<b>1,149</b>
Accident	0	7	7	2	19	35
Suicide	0	0	0	8	74	82
Homicide	3	22	16	65	914	1,020
Undetermined intent	0	1	2	2	7	12
<b>American Indian, Alaska Native</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>57</b>
Accident	0	1	0	2	4	7
Suicide	0	0	0	1	23	24
Homicide	0	2	2	4	17	25
Undetermined intent	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Asian, Pacific Islander</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>51</b>
Accident	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suicide	0	0	0	1	14	15
Homicide	0	1	1	4	30	36
Undetermined intent	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hispanic*</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>574</b>
Accident	0	0	2	3	7	12
Suicide	0	0	0	2	97	99
Homicide	3	7	11	27	412	460
Undetermined intent	0	0	0	1	2	3

\*Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>> , accessed December 2006.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

## Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Manner, 2002-2004

	Total*			Homicide*			Suicide			Accident			Undetermined Intent		
	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
Alabama	68	59	52	36	34	31	22	17	16	10	7	4	0	1	1
Alaska	18	26	22	7	10	7	10	13	15	1	2	0	0	1	0
Arizona	101	64	76	58	38	43	30	21	25	8	3	6	5	2	2
Arkansas	39	27	16	18	11	8	12	9	4	6	5	3	3	2	1
California	406	429	468	337	355	406	54	55	49	13	15	10	2	4	3
Colorado	53	32	48	20	20	23	30	10	24	1	1	1	2	1	0
Connecticut	15	12	11	10	10	9	4	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Delaware	10	10	9	4	6	7	3	3	1	3	0	1	0	1	0
District of Columbia	36	28	40	34	28	39	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Florida	120	109	111	81	81	76	33	23	30	5	3	5	1	2	0
Georgia	104	83	89	65	58	57	28	24	27	9	1	4	2	0	1
Hawaii	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	19	13	16	3	4	3	12	9	10	4	0	3	0	0	0
Illinois	146	158	143	127	131	123	15	20	17	3	7	3	1	0	0
Indiana	69	54	56	31	32	33	28	15	19	9	6	4	1	1	0
Iowa	17	12	16	6	1	2	9	11	13	2	0	1	0	0	0
Kansas	17	26	26	6	10	13	9	13	12	2	3	1	0	0	0
Kentucky	33	34	40	12	9	18	13	13	20	6	10	2	2	2	0
Louisiana	100	88	88	70	57	54	19	22	25	10	8	8	1	1	1
Maine	3	9	10	0	1	0	3	7	10	0	1	0	0	0	0
Maryland	92	80	71	77	67	61	14	13	9	1	0	1	0	0	0
Massachusetts	25	22	32	22	17	26	1	5	6	2	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	100	79	104	60	49	57	36	25	34	4	2	8	0	3	5
Minnesota	29	40	39	9	17	15	18	19	24	1	3	0	1	1	0
Mississippi	58	38	43	28	23	23	21	8	15	7	7	4	2	0	1
Missouri	72	53	61	45	32	38	25	18	21	2	1	2	0	2	0
Montana	15	14	12	2	5	1	10	9	10	1	0	1	2	0	0
Nebraska	11	17	15	5	6	4	6	10	9	0	1	2	0	0	0
Nevada	25	27	27	19	13	18	6	12	7	0	1	2	0	1	0
New Hampshire	4	5	4	1	0	1	3	3	3	0	1	0	0	1	0
New Jersey	32	36	48	24	35	41	5	1	7	3	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	32	35	28	15	18	11	16	15	17	1	1	0	0	1	0
New York	91	131	89	74	94	69	14	32	16	3	5	4	0	0	0
North Carolina	71	100	70	47	59	40	21	33	22	1	7	5	2	1	3
North Dakota	5	7	10	0	4	1	4	2	6	1	1	1	0	0	2
Ohio	83	75	80	52	49	46	22	21	28	6	5	5	3	0	1
Oklahoma	38	34	29	13	12	13	22	21	13	3	1	3	0	0	0
Oregon	36	15	21	14	7	12	17	7	6	2	0	3	3	1	0
Pennsylvania	113	130	132	73	81	87	35	41	39	4	4	5	1	4	1
Rhode Island	10	6	4	8	4	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
South Carolina	40	50	44	26	36	19	9	10	18	4	3	6	1	1	1
South Dakota	7	9	10	0	0	1	4	8	7	2	1	2	1	0	0
Tennessee	79	58	73	47	32	30	22	19	29	8	6	10	2	1	4
Texas	220	244	236	140	146	144	72	85	79	7	10	10	1	3	3
Utah	17	25	15	3	3	4	14	18	11	0	4	0	0	0	0
Vermont	2	4	3	1	1	0	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Virginia	72	83	76	50	58	50	17	22	21	4	2	4	1	1	1
Washington	40	48	49	17	17	18	21	25	27	1	3	4	1	3	0
West Virginia	20	14	12	7	7	4	10	6	8	3	1	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	49	63	43	24	31	14	23	26	27	2	5	1	0	1	1
Wyoming	4	11	8	1	2	2	2	7	4	0	2	2	1	0	0
United States	2,867	2,827	2,825	1,830	1,822	1,804	828	810	846	167	151	143	42	44	32

\*Total firearm deaths and homicide firearm deaths exclude firearm deaths by legal (police or corrections) intervention.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, Table III: Deaths from 358 Selected Causes, 2002-2003; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>>, data accessed January 2007. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

# Firearm Deaths, by Manner and by Race/Hispanic Origin, Persons Under Age 20, 1979-2004

	Race/ Hispanic Origin									
	Manner	Race/ Hispanic Origin								
		Total	Homicide	Suicide	Accident	Unknown	Black	White	American Indian, Alaska Native*	Asian, Pacific Islander*
1979	3,710	1,651	1,220	726	113	929	2,700	--	--	--
1980	3,749	1,743	1,214	689	103	944	2,739	--	--	--
1981	3,589	1,660	1,213	604	112	944	2,569	49	27	
1982	3,332	1,498	1,207	550	77	811	2,450	55	23	--
1983	2,962	1,238	1,150	504	70	739	2,155	42	25	--
1984	3,030	1,289	1,114	552	75	716	2,238	44	32	--
1985	3,169	1,322	1,256	519	72	850	2,241	42	36	--
1986	3,349	1,513	1,293	472	71	938	2,337	43	31	--
1987	3,400	1,573	1,281	467	79	1,117	2,199	28	54	--
1988	3,974	1,953	1,387	543	91	1,458	2,405	76	53	--
1989	4,384	2,367	1,380	567	70	1,694	2,563	50	76	--
1990	4,935	2,852	1,476	541	66	2,047	2,753	47	87	748
1991	5,329	3,247	1,436	551	95	2,297	2,878	60	91	883
1992	5,353	3,336	1,426	501	90	2,359	2,834	55	105	924
1993	5,715	3,625	1,460	526	104	2,600	2,925	51	139	977
1994	5,793	3,579	1,565	512	137	2,559	3,024	75	135	993
1995	5,254	3,249	1,450	440	115	2,153	2,898	73	130	1,005
1996	4,613	2,836	1,309	376	92	1,976	2,475	64	98	817
1997	4,205	2,562	1,262	306	75	1,687	2,357	59	102	748
1998	3,761	2,184	1,241	262	74	1,416	2,197	60	88	661
1999	3,365	1,990	1,078	214	83	1,301	1,934	57	73	605
2000	3,012	1,776	1,007	193	36	1,149	1,762	44	57	568
2001	2,911	1,771	928	182	30	1,128	1,695	49	39	518
2002	2,867	1,830	828	167	42	1,112	1,639	52	64	581
2003	2,827	1,822	810	151	44	1,172	1,554	50	51	553
2004	2,825	1,804	846	143	32	1,149	1,568	57	51	574
Total	101,413	56,270	31,837	11,258	2,048	37,245	61,089	1,282	1,667	11,155

\* Data for American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander not available for 1979-1980.

\*\* Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race. Hispanic data not available prior to 1990. For 1990 to 1996, a small number of states with small Hispanic populations did not include Hispanic identifiers in their reporting to the federal government.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, at <<http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>> , accessed December 2004; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>> , accessed December 2004, January 2006, and December 2006. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.



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