

# Children's Defense Fund Protect Children, Not Guns Overview<sup>i</sup>



## **2,694 children and teens died from guns in the United States in 2010.**

The Children's Defense Fund's publication, *Protect Children, Not Guns 2013*, analyzes the latest fatal and nonfatal gun injury data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for children and teens ages 0-19.

### **The U.S. has as many guns as people.**

- The U.S. accounts for less than 5 percent of the global population, but owns an estimated 35 to 50 percent of all civilian-owned guns in the world.
- The most recent estimate of U.S. civilian gun ownership is as high as 310 million, about one gun per person. In contrast, U.S. military and law enforcement agencies possess a total of 4 million guns.
- American companies manufacture enough bullets each year to fire 31 rounds into every one of our citizens.

### **A gun in the home increases the risk of homicide, suicide and accidental death.**

- A gun in the home makes the likelihood of homicide three times higher, suicide three to five times higher, and accidental death four times higher. For every time a gun in the home injures or kills in self-defense, there are 11 completed and attempted gun suicides, seven criminal assaults and homicides with a gun, and four unintentional shooting deaths or injuries.
- More than half of youth who committed suicide with a gun obtained the gun from their home, usually a parent's gun.

### **U.S. children and teens are 17 times more likely to die from a gun than their peers in 25 other high-income countries combined.**

- U.S. children and teens made up 43 percent of all children and teens in these 26 countries but were 93 percent of all children and teens killed by guns.
- In 2010, children and teen gun death rates in the U.S. were over four times higher than in Canada, the country with the next highest rate, nearly seven times higher than in Israel, and nearly 65 times higher than in the United Kingdom.
- U.S. children and teens were 32 times more likely to die from a gun homicide and 10 times more likely to die from a gun suicide or a gun accident than all their peers in the other high-income countries combined.

### **A child or teen dies or is injured from guns every 30 minutes.**

- **18,270** children and teens died or were injured from guns in 2010
  - **1** child or teen died or was injured every 30 minutes.
  - **50** children and teens died or were injured every day.
  - **351** children and teens died or were injured every week.

### **More children and teens die from guns every three days than died in the Newtown massacre.**

- 2,694 children and teens died from guns in 2010.
  - **1** child or teen died every 3 hours and 15 minutes.
  - **7** children and teens died every day, more than 20 every three days.
  - **51** children and teens died every week.
- The children and teens who died from guns in 2010 would fill 134 classrooms of 20 children.

## **Guns are the second leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1-19 and the number one cause among Black children and teens.**

- Only motor vehicle accidents kill more children and teens every year.
- White and Asian/Pacific Islander children and teens were nearly three times more likely, American Indian/Alaska Native children and teens more than two times as likely, and Hispanic children and teens one-and-a-half times more likely to be killed in a car accident than by a gun.
- In contrast, Black children and teens were twice as likely to be killed by a gun than to be killed in a car accident.

## **Although total gun deaths dropped in 2010 for the fourth consecutive year, gun death rates remained higher than in the early 1960s.**

- In 2010, the rate of gun deaths in children and teens was 30 percent higher than in 1963, when data were first collected from all states.
- While Black children and teens have experienced the highest rates of gun deaths, the largest number of deaths has been among White children and teens. Out of the estimated 166,600 children and teens who have died from guns between 1963 and 2010, 53 percent were among White children and teens, and 36 percent were among Black children and teens.
- Between 1963 and 2010, 59,265 Black children and teens were killed by guns—more than 17 times greater than the recorded lynchings of Black people of all ages in the 86 years from 1882 to 1968.

## **Since 1963, three times more children and teens died from guns on American soil than U.S. soldiers killed in action in wars abroad.**

- 166,500 children and teens died from guns on American soil between 1963 and 2010, while 52,183 U.S. soldiers were killed in action in the Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars combined during that same period.
- On average 3,470 children and teens were killed by guns every year from 1963 to 2010, or 174 classrooms of 20 children every year.

## **Nearly three times more children and teens were injured by guns in 2010 than the number of U.S. soldiers wounded in action that year in the war in Afghanistan.**

- An estimated 15,576 children and teens were injured by guns in 2010.
  - 1 child or teen was injured every 34 minutes.
  - 43 children and teens were injured every day.
  - 300 children and teens were injured every week.
  - 5,247 U.S. soldiers were injured in the war in Afghanistan in 2010.

## **Children and teens die from gun violence in all states.**

- Every state lost children to gun violence between 2000 and 2010. The number of deaths varied from 15 in Hawaii to 4,668 in California.
- The deadliest state was Alaska with 8.7 gun deaths for every 100,000 children and teens each year, more than twice the nationwide rate of 3.6. Alaska was 21 times more deadly for children and teens than Hawaii, the safest state.

## **Guns kill more children under 5 than law enforcement officers in the line of duty.**

- 82 children under 5 died from guns in 2010, compared to 55 law enforcement officers killed by guns in the line of duty.

## **Children are more likely to be exposed to violence than adults.**

- The 2008 National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence found that nearly two-thirds of children and teens had been victims or witnesses of violence within the past year.
- Nearly 1 in 10 children and 1 in 5 14-17 year-olds had witnessed a shooting at some point in their lives.

## **Black, Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native children and teens are disproportionately more likely to die or be injured by guns.**

- In 2010, 45 percent of gun deaths and 46 percent of gun injuries were among Black children and teens, although they comprised only 15 percent of all children and teens.

- Black children and teens were 4.7 times more likely to die from guns than White children and teens, and 8.5 times more likely to be injured. American Indian or Alaska Native children and teens were 2.4 times more likely to die from guns than White children and teens. Hispanic children were 3.3 times more likely to be injured from guns compared to White children and teens.
- Black children and teens were 17 times more likely to die from a gun homicide than White children the same age.
- American Indian or Alaska Native children and teens had the highest rate of gun suicides, nearly twice as high as White children and teens.

**Homicide is the leading manner of gun death among children and teens and assault the leading manner of gun injury.**

- Children and teen gun deaths were most likely to be homicides; adult gun deaths were most likely to be suicides.
- Two out of three child and teen gun deaths were homicides; a little over one out of four were suicides.
- Among nonfatal gun injuries, a little over three out of four resulted from assaults while nearly one out of five was accidental.

**Older teenagers are most at risk from gun violence, Black male teens are most at risk.**

- Eighty-six percent of gun deaths and 89 percent of gun injuries in 2010 occurred in 15-19 year-olds.
- Black males ages 15-19 were nearly 30 times more likely to die in a gun homicide than White males of the same age and more than three times more likely to die in a gun homicide than Hispanic males of the same age.

**Total gun deaths and injuries in 2010 cost the U.S. \$174.1 billion, or 1.15 percent of our gross domestic product.**

- The 105,177 gun deaths and injuries to children, teens and adults that occurred in 2010 cost the nation \$8.4 billion in medical and other direct costs, \$52.5 billion in lost productivity and lost wages, and \$113.3 billion in lost enjoyment of life.

---

<sup>i</sup> See "Protect Children Not Guns 2013" for sources