



Gun Violence

For thousands of teens, death from gun violence is the end of the pipeline. In 2007, 3,042 children and teens died from gunfire in the U.S.—almost eight every day—as a result of homicide, suicide or accidental shootings. Almost six times as many children and teens – 17,523 – suffered non-fatal gun injuries, which have serious physical and emotional consequences. Random violence, especially in poor communities, drives thousands of vulnerable young people into the pipeline to prison where they remain trapped with little chance of escape.

- The 3,042 deaths of children and teens from gunfire in 2007 nearly equaled the total number of U.S. combat deaths in Iraq through May 2010 (3,475).
- More Black than White children and teens were killed by firearms in 2007.
- Black males ages 15–19 are more than five times as likely as White youths and more than twice as likely as Hispanic youths to be killed by a firearm. White children and teens are six times as likely as any other racial or ethnic group to be victims of firearm-related suicide.
- The annual number of firearm deaths of White children and teens *decreased* by about 54 percent between 1979 and 2007, while the deaths of Black children and teens *increased* by 61 percent.
- Since 1979 gun violence has ended the lives of 110,645 children and teens in America.
- Almost one in five high school students admitted carrying a weapon in 2007; one-third of those students brought the weapon to school. One in 20 admitted carrying a gun. More than one-third had been in a physical fight.
- One in 18 high school students reported staying home from school because they felt unsafe at school or going to or from school.

Children and Teens Killed by Firearms: A Portrait

The latest data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that 3,042 children and teens died from gunfire in the United States in 2007—one every three hours, eight every day, 58 every week.

2,161	were homicide victims
683	committed suicide
198	died in accidental or undetermined circumstances
2,665	were boys
377	were girls
397	were under age 15
154	were under age 10
85	were under age 5
1,499	were Black
1,460	were White
611	were Latino*
43	were Asian or Pacific Islander
40	were American Indian or Alaska Native

More than five times as many children and teens—17,451—suffered non-fatal gun injuries, which also can have serious physical and emotional consequences.

There are more than 280 million privately owned firearms in the United States, which is the equivalent of nine firearms for every ten men, women and children in this country.

* Persons of Hispanic/Latino origin can be of any race; these 678 deaths are included in the four race categories.

Since 1979, more than 110,000 children and teens have been killed by firearms.
Fifty-seven percent were homicides and 31 percent were suicides.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Manner, 1979–2007

	Total*	Homicide*	Suicide	Accident	Unknown
1979	3,710	1,651	1,220	726	113
1980	3,749	1,743	1,214	689	103
1981	3,589	1,660	1,213	604	112
1982	3,332	1,498	1,207	550	77
1983	2,962	1,238	1,150	504	70
1984	3,030	1,289	1,114	552	75
1985	3,169	1,322	1,256	519	72
1986	3,349	1,513	1,293	472	71
1987	3,400	1,573	1,281	467	79
1988	3,974	1,953	1,387	543	91
1989	4,384	2,367	1,380	567	70
1990	4,935	2,852	1,476	541	66
1991	5,329	3,247	1,436	551	95
1992	5,353	3,336	1,426	501	90
1993	5,715	3,625	1,460	526	104
1994	5,793	3,579	1,565	512	137
1995	5,254	3,249	1,450	440	115
1996	4,613	2,836	1,309	376	92
1997	4,205	2,562	1,262	306	75
1998	3,761	2,184	1,241	262	74
1999	3,365	1,990	1,078	214	83
2000	3,012	1,776	1,007	193	36
2001	2,911	1,771	928	182	30
2002	2,867	1,830	828	167	42
2003	2,827	1,822	810	151	44
2004	2,825	1,804	846	143	32
2005	3,006	1,972	822	173	39
2006	3,184	2,225	763	154	42
2007	3,042	2,161	683	138	60
Total	110,645	62,628	34,105	11,723	2,189

*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, 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 Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, April 2009, and June 2010.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

More Black than White children and teens were killed by firearms in 2007. Black children and teens are more likely to be victims of homicide. White children and teens are more likely to be victims of suicide.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Age, Manner, and Race/Hispanic Origin, 2007

	Under 5	Ages 5–9	Ages 10–14	Ages 15–19	Total under age 20
All races	85	69	243	2,645	3,042
Accident	19	20	26	73	138
Suicide	0	0	53	630	683
Homicide	63	47	154	1,897	2,161
Undetermined intent	3	2	10	45	60
White	50	43	144	1,223	1,460
Accident	12	10	22	43	87
Suicide	0	0	43	518	561
Homicide	36	31	72	645	784
Undetermined intent	2	2	7	17	28
Black	32	25	91	1,351	1,499
Accident	6	9	4	29	48
Suicide	0	0	9	80	89
Homicide	25	16	76	1,217	1,334
Undetermined intent	1	0	2	25	28
American Indian, Alaska Native	3	1	4	32	40
Accident	1	1	0	1	3
Suicide	0	0	1	19	20
Homicide	2	0	3	10	15
Undetermined intent	0	0	0	2	2
Asian, Pacific Islander	0	0	4	39	43
Accident	0	0	0	0	0
Suicide	0	0	0	13	13
Homicide	0	0	3	25	28
Undetermined intent	0	0	1	1	2
Hispanic*	19	8	45	539	611
Accident	4	2	2	14	22
Suicide	0	0	2	90	92
Homicide	14	6	39	427	486
Undetermined intent	1	0	2	8	11

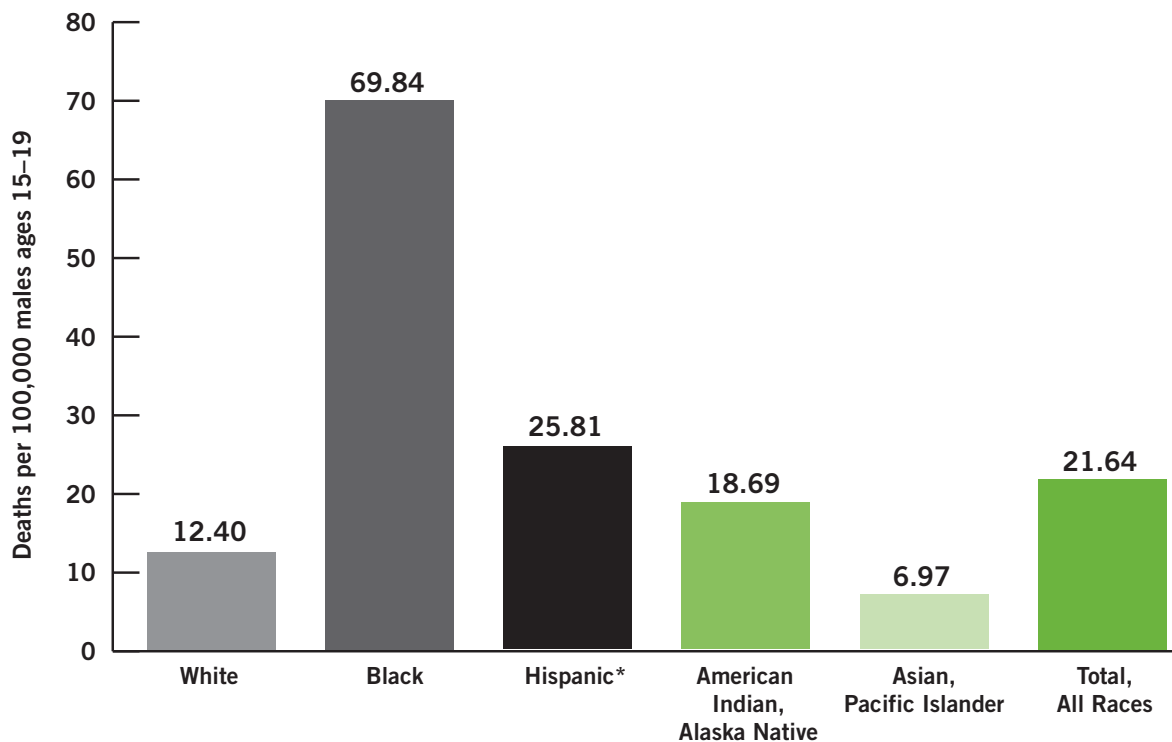
*Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

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 June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Black males 15 to 19 are more than five times as likely as White males and more than twice as likely as Hispanic and American Indian males to be killed by firearms.

Firearm Death Rates of Males Ages 15–19 by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2007

Black males ages 15 to 19 are more than five times as likely as their White peers and more than twice as likely as their Hispanic peers to be killed by firearms.



*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 June 2010.

Calculations by Children’s Defense Fund.

Since 1979 the annual number of firearm deaths of White children and teens decreased by about 54 percent, but deaths of Black children and teens increased by 61 percent.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Race/Hispanic Origin, 1979–2007

	Total	Black	White	American Indian, Alaska Native*	Asian, Pacific Islander*	Hispanic**
1979	3,710	929	2,700	—	—	—
1980	3,749	944	2,739	—	—	—
1981	3,589	944	2,569	49	27	—
1982	3,332	811	2,450	55	23	—
1983	2,962	739	2,155	42	25	—
1984	3,030	716	2,238	44	32	—
1985	3,169	850	2,241	42	36	—
1986	3,349	938	2,337	43	31	—
1987	3,400	1,117	2,199	28	54	—
1988	3,974	1,458	2,405	76	53	—
1989	4,384	1,694	2,563	50	76	—
1990	4,935	2,047	2,753	47	87	748
1991	5,329	2,297	2,878	60	91	883
1992	5,353	2,359	2,834	55	105	924
1993	5,715	2,600	2,925	51	139	977
1994	5,793	2,559	3,024	75	135	993
1995	5,254	2,153	2,898	73	130	1,005
1996	4,613	1,976	2,475	64	98	817
1997	4,205	1,687	2,357	59	102	748
1998	3,761	1,416	2,197	60	88	661
1999	3,365	1,301	1,934	57	73	605
2000	3,012	1,149	1,762	44	57	568
2001	2,911	1,128	1,695	49	39	518
2002	2,867	1,112	1,639	52	64	581
2003	2,827	1,172	1,554	50	51	553
2004	2,825	1,149	1,568	57	51	574
2005	3,006	1,271	1,624	51	60	614
2006	3,184	1,441	1,618	48	77	678
2007	3,042	1,499	1,460	40	43	611
Total	110,645	41,456	65,791	1,421	1,847	13,058

* 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 Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, April 2009, and June 2010.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

The number of children and teens killed by firearms increased in 19 states and the District of Columbia and decreased in 29 states between 2006 and 2007.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Manner, 2005–2007

	Total*			Homicide*			Suicide			Accident			Undetermined Intent		
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
Alabama	64	59	69	39	39	52	17	18	11	7	2	4	1	0	2
Alaska	13	17	14	5	5	5	8	9	8	0	3	0	0	0	1
Arizona	102	112	82	62	68	53	35	35	17	2	3	4	3	6	8
Arkansas	46	34	35	17	20	23	23	13	8	5	0	4	1	1	0
California	474	511	431	392	435	376	54	54	43	25	20	8	3	2	4
Colorado	44	46	33	19	22	13	20	19	16	4	1	1	1	4	3
Connecticut	10	24	14	7	20	10	2	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	1
Delaware	7	6	7	4	4	6	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
District of Columbia	26	23	26	26	22	25	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Florida	148	172	176	96	122	136	46	37	31	5	11	3	1	2	6
Georgia	80	87	114	54	60	87	21	18	16	5	5	8	0	4	3
Hawaii	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	16	22	14	5	5	0	9	15	12	2	2	2	0	0	0
Illinois	130	154	150	111	133	128	13	16	17	6	5	4	0	0	1
Indiana	62	74	50	41	51	31	18	18	16	1	4	3	2	1	0
Iowa	15	28	15	4	11	4	10	15	10	1	2	1	0	0	0
Kansas	18	25	36	11	9	19	4	14	17	3	2	0	0	0	0
Kentucky	36	30	42	17	11	21	16	14	17	2	4	3	1	1	1
Louisiana	110	98	114	67	75	82	30	14	21	12	8	10	1	1	1
Maine	1	6	5	0	3	1	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	75	79	82	64	66	73	10	10	9	0	2	0	1	1	0
Massachusetts	27	24	31	26	21	26	0	3	4	1	0	1	0	0	0
Michigan	92	128	119	65	93	92	23	32	23	2	3	2	2	0	2
Minnesota	42	28	27	16	17	11	23	11	16	1	0	0	2	0	0
Mississippi	30	41	50	12	24	20	9	6	16	7	9	13	2	2	1
Missouri	73	90	85	44	63	55	16	19	20	10	7	5	3	1	5
Montana	18	6	8	2	0	2	15	4	6	1	2	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	19	17	20	3	9	10	15	8	8	1	0	2	0	0	0
Nevada	34	41	38	20	26	27	14	14	9	0	1	2	0	0	0
New Hampshire	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	45	58	53	40	54	50	4	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
New Mexico	25	33	36	11	15	14	12	18	16	2	0	3	0	0	3
New York	93	115	107	66	96	93	20	17	13	6	2	1	1	0	0
North Carolina	91	94	91	58	60	67	26	27	17	6	4	7	1	3	0
North Dakota	11	10	3	1	0	0	9	7	3	1	1	0	0	2	0
Ohio	118	106	104	78	72	65	28	29	32	12	5	3	0	0	4
Oklahoma	35	46	45	19	30	24	12	12	16	2	3	5	2	1	0
Oregon	17	24	15	2	11	3	12	13	11	3	0	1	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	138	159	126	99	121	93	32	30	21	4	8	8	3	0	4
Rhode Island	7	5	0	6	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	41	51	60	24	37	46	12	11	8	5	3	4	0	0	2
South Dakota	11	9	5	2	0	0	7	7	5	2	2	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	77	69	61	48	43	40	22	21	19	7	4	2	0	1	0
Texas	264	237	250	164	162	160	84	58	73	13	14	15	3	3	2
Utah	10	15	15	3	1	5	7	13	9	0	1	1	0	0	0
Vermont	3	4	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Virginia	79	66	76	54	40	57	22	21	19	1	3	0	2	2	0
Washington	44	38	32	20	13	16	21	19	15	1	3	1	2	3	0
West Virginia	19	10	10	9	4	3	9	5	4	0	1	2	1	0	1
Wisconsin	56	46	57	33	27	35	20	18	14	3	1	4	0	0	4
Wyoming	7	4	6	3	0	1	4	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
United States	3,006	3,184	3,042	1,972	2,225	2,161	822	763	683	173	154	138	39	42	60

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

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>>. data accessed February 2008, April 2009, and June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Children and teens killed by gunfire in 2006 nearly equaled the total number of U.S. combat deaths in Iraq since the war started and were more than four times the number of American combat fatalities in Afghanistan.

It's Time to Stop the Deaths

U.S. Soldiers Killed in Action

Revolutionary War, 1775–1783	4,435
War of 1812, 1812–1815	2,260
Mexican War, 1846–1848	1,733
Civil War (Union Forces), 1861–1865	140,414
Spanish-American War, 1898	385
World War I, 1917–1918	53,402
World War II, 1941–1945	291,557
Korean War, 1950–1953	33,741
Vietnam War, 1961–1973	47,424
Persian Gulf War, 1990–1991	147
Military fatalities by hostile action in Afghanistan (through May 1, 2010)	762
Military fatalities by hostile action in Iraq (through May 1, 2010)	3,475
Persons Killed in the Terrorist Attacks on 9/11	2,927

U.S. Firearm Deaths

Firearm deaths in America since 1968 when Dr. King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated	1,265,734
Child and teen firearm deaths since 1979	110,645
Children and teens killed by firearms in 2007	3,042

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Statistical Information Analysis Division, "Principal Wars in Which the United States Participated: U.S. Military Personnel Serving and Casualties," at <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/WCPRINCIPAL.pdf>, "Operation Enduring Freedom: Military Deaths, October 1, 2001 through May 1, 2010," at <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/oefdeaths.pdf>, and "Operation Iraqi Freedom: Military Deaths, March 19, 2003 through May 1, 2010," at <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/oif-deaths-total.pdf>; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics of the United States, various years; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>.

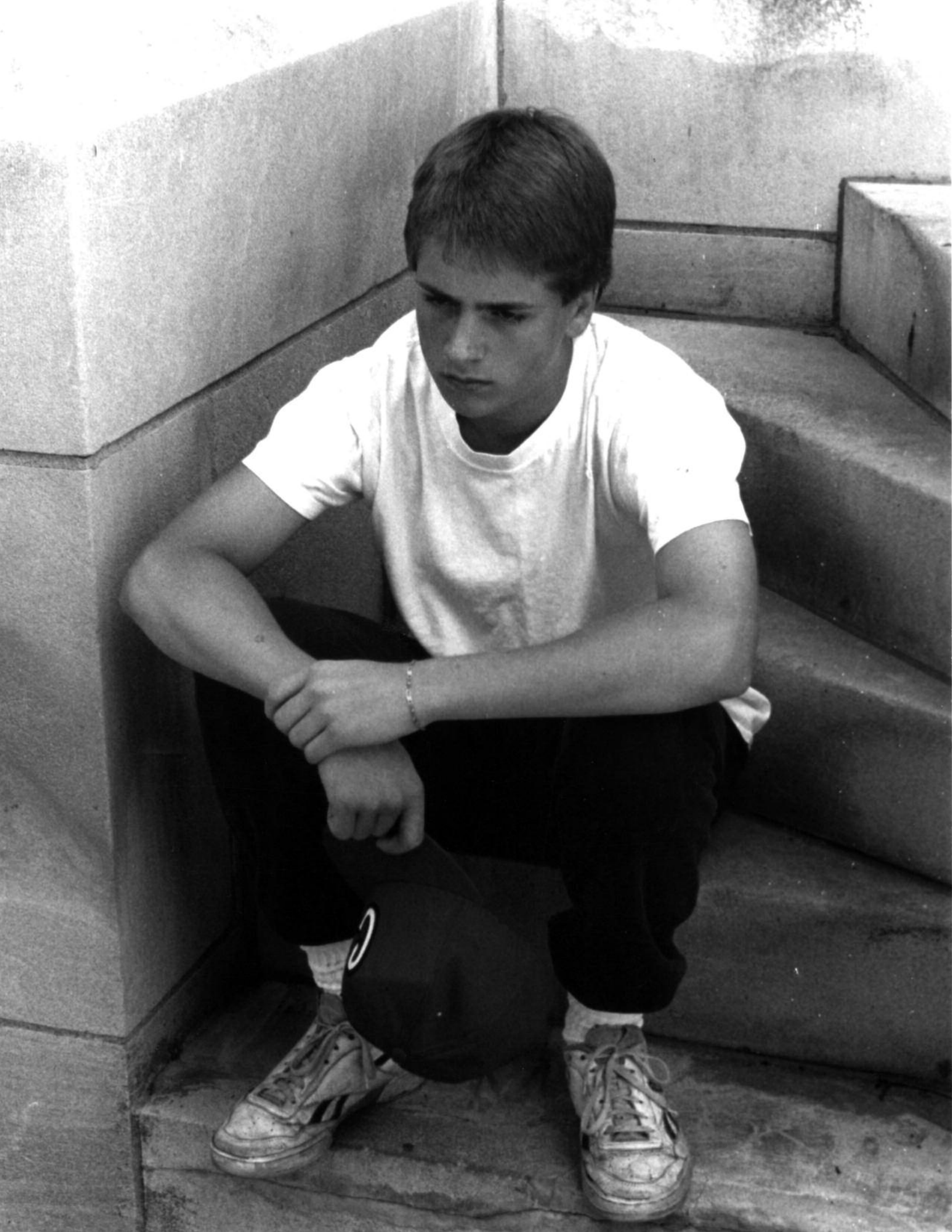
In 2007 almost one in five high school students admitted carrying a weapon; one-third of them brought the weapon to school. One in 18 high school students reported staying home from school because they felt unsafe at school or going to or from school.

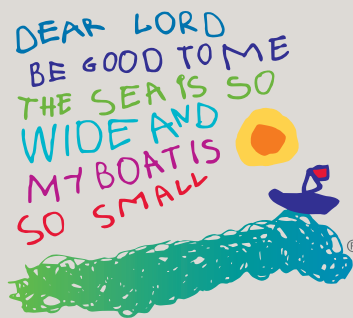
Violence and Risk Behaviors of High School Students, 2007

	Total	Race/Ethnicity			Grade			
		White	Black	Hispanic	9	10	11	12
Carried a weapon	18.0%	18.2%	17.2%	18.5%	20.1%	18.8%	16.7%	15.5%
Carried a gun	5.2	4.3	6.2	6.2	5.2	5.5	4.6	5.0
Carried a weapon to school	5.9	5.3	6.0	7.3	6.0	5.8	5.5	6.0
Threatened or injured with a weapon on school property	7.8	6.9	9.7	8.7	9.2	8.4	6.8	6.3
In a physical fight	35.5	31.7	44.7	40.4	40.9	36.2	34.8	28.0
Injured in a physical fight	4.2	3.0	5.3	6.3	5.6	3.7	3.5	3.3
In a physical fight on school property	12.4	10.2	17.6	15.5	17.0	11.7	11.0	8.6
Did not go to school because felt unsafe at school or on way to/from school	5.5	4.0	6.6	9.6	6.6	5.4	4.7	4.8

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Surveillance Summaries, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2007," MMWR, Vol. 57, No. SS-4 (June 6, 2008), Tables 7, 9, 13, 15 and 17.

**For more information on the State of America's Children,
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Children's Defense Fund