

Children's Defense Fund Protect Children Not Guns Factsheet 2016 Child Gun Deaths



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A child or teen dies from a gun every 2 hours and 48 minutes.

- 3,128 children and teens died from guns in the United States in 2016, one every 2 hours and 48 minutes.
- The children and teens who died from guns in 2016 would fill 156 classrooms of 20 children.
- As shocked as the nation was by the 2012 Newtown massacre, more children and teens died from guns every three days in 2016 than died on that day.

2016 marked the greatest number of child and teen gun deaths since 2006.

- 2014 reversed a seven-year trend of declining child and teen gun deaths, with 80 more children and teens being killed by guns than in 2013. 2015 continued that disturbing trend with 274 additional children and teens being killed than in 2014. 2016 represented an even greater increase with 329 more children and teens being killed than in 2015.
- The number and rate of children and teens killed by guns in 2015 are higher than for any other year since 2006.

Guns killed more children under 5 in 2016 than law enforcement officers in the line of duty.

- 113 children under 5 died from guns in 2016, compared to 65 law enforcement officers killed by guns in the line of duty. Guns were used in criminal acts to kill 62 law enforcement officers while 3 were killed in gun accidents.

Black children and teens are disproportionately affected by gun violence.

- In 2016, 43 percent of gun deaths were among Black children and teens, although they made up only 14 percent of all children and teens.
- 1,335 Black children and teens were killed by guns in 2016, one every 6 hours and 34 minutes.
- The gun death rate for Black children and teens was nearly four times that for White children and teens and more than 8 times that for Asian and Pacific Islander children and teens.
- The majority of gun deaths among Black children and teens were by homicide. The majority of deaths by White children and teens were by suicide.

Child and teen gun death rates remain higher than in the early 1960s.

- In 2016, the rate of gun deaths among children and teens was 41 percent higher than in 1963, when data were first collected from all states.

- Between 1963 and 2016, 65,947 Black children and teens have been killed by guns — more than 16 times the recorded lynchings of Black people of all ages in the 74 years from 1877 to 1950.
- While Black children and teens have been disproportionately more likely to die from guns since the early 1960s, over half the deaths since 1963 were among White children and teens.
- On average 3,426 children and teens — 171 classrooms of 20 children — were killed by guns every year from 1963 to 2016.

Since 1963, over three times more children and teens died from guns on American soil than U.S. soldiers were killed by hostilities in wars abroad.

- 181,578 children and teens died from guns on American soil between 1963 and 2016. By contrast, 52,988 U.S. soldiers were killed by hostilities in the Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars during that same period.

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 approximately 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.

- Guns are more often used to cause harm than in self-protection. 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 each 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.

Note: Gun injury data are not yet available for 2016.

Sources: Gun deaths: CDC WONDER Online Database, <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>. Gun injuries: CDC Nonfatal Injury Reports, <http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/nfirates2001.html>, based on the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program. All child and teen data are for ages 0 -19 and exclude deaths for interactions with law enforcement. Law enforcement deaths (includes felonious and accidental deaths by firearms): Federal Bureau of Investigation <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/leoka>. War casualties (as of February 8, 2017): Defense Casualty Analysis System, <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties.xhtml> . International comparisons: World Health Organization, Inter-country comparison of mortality for selected cause of death, <http://data.euro.who.int/dmdb/>. Lynching: Equal Justice Initiative. 2015. Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror. Note: CDF has previously used data from Tuskegee University for this statistic but EJI's recent research incorporated that work and documented several hundred more lynchings through reviews of local newspapers, historical archives and court records as well as interviews with historians, survivors and victims' descendants. For other sources see the Children's Defense Fund's Protect Children, Not Guns 2013 report, <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/protect-children-not-guns-2013.html>.