

Gun Violence

DEFINITION

Gun violence is the number of firearm-related deaths and hospitalizations to Rhode Island children and youth under age 20. The data are reported by place of residence, not place of death, injury, or hospitalization.

SIGNIFICANCE

Children and youth can experience gun violence as victims of firearm assaults, self-inflicted firearm injuries, or accidental shootings.¹ Gun violence also can impact children and youth when someone they know is the victim or perpetrator of a shooting. Exposure to violence at home, in schools, and in the community can lead to lasting psychological and emotional damage (such as increased fear, anxiety, and depression, attachment problems, and conduct disorders), as well as cognitive and attention difficulties, and involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.^{2,3}

In the U.S. during 2014, 57% of the 2,549 firearm deaths of children and youth under age 20 in the United States were the result of homicide, 36% were the result of suicide, 4% were the result of unintentional injuries, 1% was the result of shootings with an undetermined intent, and 1% was the result of a legal intervention (e.g., law enforcement shooting).⁴

While the number of children and youth killed by guns has decreased since peaking in the early 1990s, firearms remain one of the leading causes of deaths for youth ages 15 to 19 in the United States.^{5,6} Of the 2,549 U.S. children and youth under age 20 killed by firearms during 2014, 82% (2,089) were ages 15 to 19. Children under age 15 have the lowest rates of firearm-related deaths of any age group.⁷

Nationally, males ages 15 to 19 are eight times more likely to die from a firearm-related incident than females of the same age. Among teens in the U.S., the rate of firearm deaths for Black males (47 per 100,000) was more than three times the rate of Hispanic males (13 per 100,000) and more than four times the rate of White males (11 per 100,000) in 2014.⁸

Preventing access to guns is the most reliable measure to prevent firearm-related injuries and death in children and youth. The presence and availability of a gun is strongly associated with adolescent suicide risk. Possessing a gun also increases a person's risk for being shot in an assault. Keeping guns unloaded and locked, as well as storing and locking ammunition separately, reduces the risk of gun-related injury and death by suicide or homicide.^{9,10,11}

Gun-Related Emergency Department (ED) Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths Among Children and Youth, Rhode Island, 2010-2014

AGE	# OF ED VISITS	# OF HOSPITALIZATIONS	# OF DEATHS
1 to 14	53	6	2
15 to 17	62	20	3
18 to 19	74	33	9
TOTAL	189	59	14

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2010-2014. Data for 2014 are provisional.

◆ **Between 2010 and 2014 in Rhode Island, 14 (15%) of the 94 injury deaths of children and youth under age 20 were the result of firearms, down from 19 deaths between 2009-2013. Of these, 64% (9) were among youth ages 18 to 19, 21% (3) were among youth ages 15 to 17, and 14% (2) were among children ages 14 or younger. Between 2010 and 2014 in Rhode Island, there was one youth under age 20 who committed suicide using a firearm.¹²**

◆ **In Rhode Island between 2010 and 2014, there were 189 emergency department visits and 59 hospitalizations of children and youth for gun-related injuries, down from 198 and 73, respectively, in 2009-2003.¹³**

Weapon Carrying Among Rhode Island Public High School Students, 2015

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
Carried a weapon on school property at least once in the past 30 days	2%	7%	5%

Source: 2015 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis.

◆ **In Rhode Island, male students report higher rates of weapon carrying on school property and gun carrying than females. Rhode Island rates are consistent with national figures.^{14,15,16}**

References

¹ Murphy, S. L., Kochanek, K. D., Xu, J., & Heron, M. (2015). Deaths: Final data for 2012. *NVSR*, 63(9). Retrieved January 12, 2016, from www.cdc.gov

² U.S. Department of Justice, Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence. (2012). *Report of the U.S. Department of Justice National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence*. Retrieved from www.justice.gov

³ Child Trends. (2013). *Children's exposure to violence*. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from www.childtrendsdatabank.org

^{4,7} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (n.d.). *Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS)*. Retrieved January 13, 2016, from www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars

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