

# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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, depression, attachment problems, and conduct disorders) as well as cognitive and attention difficulties, and involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.<sup>2,3</sup>

In the U.S. during 2016, 59% (1,849) of the 3,155 firearm deaths of children and youth under age 20 were the result of homicide, 35% (1,102) were the result of suicide, 4% (127) were the result of unintentional injuries, 2% (50) were the result of shootings with an undetermined intent, and 1% (27) were the result of a legal intervention (e.g., law enforcement shooting).<sup>4</sup>

In the U.S., firearms are the third leading cause of death among children ages one to 17.<sup>5</sup> Of the 3,155 U.S. children and youth under age 20 killed by firearms during 2016, 84% (2,665) were ages 15 to 19.<sup>6</sup> In the U.S., 2016 marked the highest number of child and teen gun related deaths since 2006. Although Black children made up only 14% of all children and teens in the nation in 2016, 43% of all gun deaths were among Black children and teens.<sup>7</sup> Nationally, males ages 15 to 19 are eight times more likely to die from a firearm-related incident than females of the same age. In the U.S. in 2014, 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).<sup>8,9</sup>

Preventing access to guns is an important measure in preventing 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.<sup>10,11,12</sup>

## Gun-Related Deaths, Emergency Department (ED) Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths Among Children and Youth, Rhode Island, 2012-2016

AGE	# OF ED VISITS	# OF HOSPITALIZATIONS	# OF DEATHS
1 to 14	57	4	1
15 to 17	47	15	2
18 to 19	66	28	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>8</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2012-2016. Data for 2016 are provisional.

Note: Effective October 1, 2015, the International Classification of Disease (ICD) codes changed from the 9th classification to the 10th classification, which may impact comparability across the years.

◆ Between 2012 and 2016 in Rhode Island, 8% (8) of the 96 injury deaths of children and youth under age 20 were the result of firearms, down from 12 deaths between 2011 and 2015. Of these, 5% (5) were among youth ages 18 to 19, 2% (2) were among youth ages 15 to 17, and 1% (1) was among children ages 14 or younger. Between 2012 and 2016 in Rhode Island, there was one youth under age 20 who committed suicide using a firearm.<sup>13</sup>

◆ In Rhode Island between 2012 and 2016, there were 170 emergency department visits and 47 hospitalizations of children and youth for gun-related injuries.<sup>14</sup>

## Weapon Carrying Among Rhode Island Public Middle and High School Students, 2017

	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
High School students who carried a weapon on school property at least once in the past 30 days	3%	7%	5%
Middle School students who ever carried a weapon	11%	33%	22%

Source: 2017 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis.

◆ Nationally and in Rhode Island, male students report higher rates of weapon carrying on school property and gun carrying than females. In 2015, Rhode Island ranked 15th among 32 states for self-reported weapon carrying on school property.<sup>15,16,17</sup>

## References

<sup>1</sup> Murphy, S. L., Xu, J., Kochanek, K. D., Curtin, S.C., & Arias, E. (2017). Deaths: Final data for 2015. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 66(6).

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