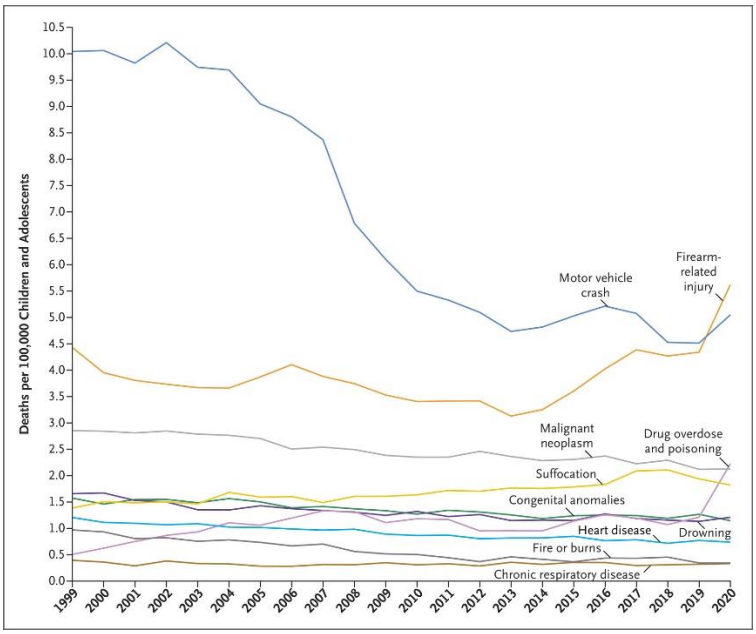
Firearm Safety Advocacy Fact Sheet

General Pediatric Firearm Injury Statistics (CDC)

- In 2020, **firearms became the leading cause of death for US children and teens**, surpassing motor vehicle collisions (Goldstick 2022 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2201761; Figure 1 below)

Figure 1. Leading Causes of Death among Children and Adolescents in the United States, 1999 through 2020



- In 2020, 4,368 children and teens aged 0-19 died in the US from firearms which represents 212,871 years of potential life lost (CDC WISQARS)
- Using CDC data from 2020, when children and teens aged 0-19 die from firearm injuries **64.4% are due to homicide, 29.6% are due to suicide, 3.4% are due to unintentional injuries**, 2.1% are undetermined intent, and 0.6% are from legal interventions
- While the nonfatal firearm injury data is not as reliable, the CDC reports 24,777 US children and teens aged 0-19 were nonfatally shot in 2020. That is a ratio of approximately **1:5.5 of children fatally injured to children nonfatally injured from a firearm**.

Tennessee

- In an average year, 1,273 people die by guns in TN
- **Tennessee and Texas lead the nation in unintentional shootings of children**
    - **Tennessee had the 14th-highest rate of pediatric firearm mortality in 2020**
- With a rate of 18.6 deaths per 100,000 people, **Tennessee has the 11th-highest rate of gun deaths in the US**
- Tennessee has the 8th highest rate of gun homicide deaths in the US
- Gun violence costs Tennessee $9.0 billion each year, of which $433.2 million is paid by taxpayers
- Data from CDC and 2020 from https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2022-05/2020-gun-deaths-in-the-us-4-28-2022-b.pdf

Racial Inequities

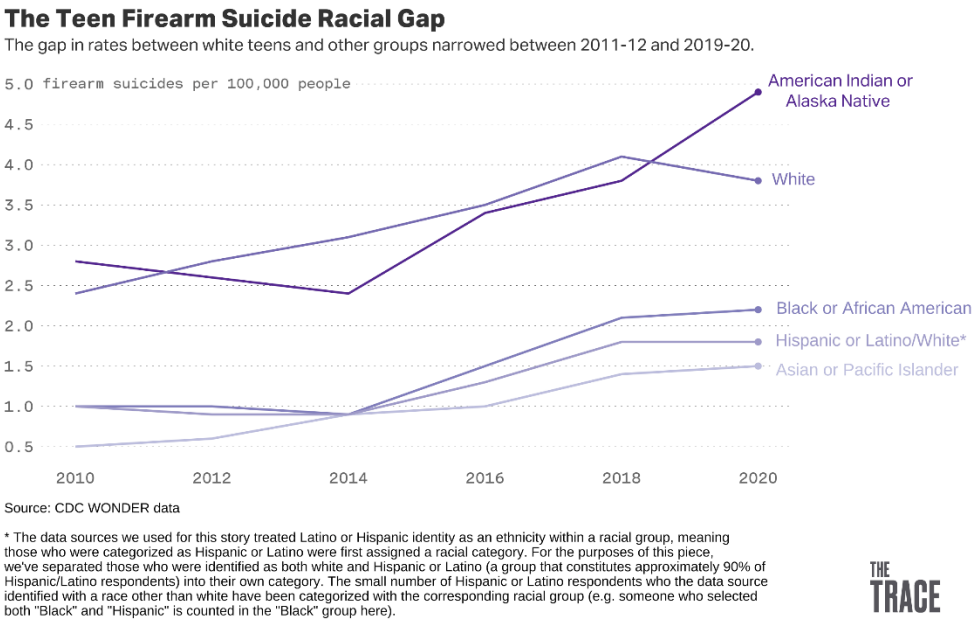
- Firearms have been the leading cause of death for Black teens and young men for years
- **Black Americans are 10x more likely to die by firearm homicide**
- Racial inequities are widening with Black youth disproportionately affected by firearm violence. **In 2019, Black youth had a firearm mortality rate 4.3x higher than that of White youth and a firearm homicide rate over 14x higher than that of White youth**
    - For each additional year after 2013, the mortality rate for Black youth increased by 0.55 deaths per 100 000 compared with White youth (time by race interaction effect P < .0001). (Andrews 2022 https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-052739)

Mass Shootings

- Mass shootings are generally defined as ≥ 4 people (not including the shooter) injured or killed
- **Mass shootings have risen annually since 2018** [336 (2018)→ 417 (2019)→610 (2020) → 692 (2021) → 293 (2022, slightly less than this time last year- approx. 335)]
    - https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/
- **One out of four mass shooting victims are children**.
    - While it is common to think of school shootings when you consider mass shootings, most of these shootings occur in private homes.
- The harm posed when people who should not have guns can easily avoid a background check is particularly evident in mass shootings, where **1/3 incidents involved shooters that were legally prohibited from possessing firearms at the time of the shooting** (felony conviction, adjudicated mentally ill by a court of law, or domestic violence restraining order, etc).
    - These shootings resulted in 364 deaths and 125 injuries.
- In 2022, there hasn't been a single week without a mass shooting. More than **80 of those mass shootings have occurred in the month since Uvalde on May 24th**, 4 of which have been in Tennessee.

Suicides

- Represent approximately 30% of pediatric firearm deaths, but about 55% for adults
- **The rate of firearm suicide among young people has increased significantly over the past decade. It has increased at a higher rate for children and teens of color** (CDC Wonder Data)
    - Percent change in firearm suicide deaths for children/teens aged 10-19 over the past decade was 36% for White teens, 88% for American Indian or Alaska Native teens, 100% for Hispanic/Latino teens, 120% for Black teens, and 150% for Asian or Pacific Islander teens
    - For young people aged 10-24 the rate has increased by 53%. **Alarmingly, for children aged 10-14 the rate of firearm suicide has increased by 146% from 2011 to 2020**. In this same time period, rate of non-firearm suicides increased by 25%.
    - See this great article from The Trace highlighting these data, the potential reasons we are seeing the disparities, and possible solutions as well as this commentary by Dr. Eric Fleegler regarding what we do and don't know about youth firearm suicide.



- Means matter, because **firearms are particularly lethal with a case fatality of approximately 90% when used in suicide attempts** (Conner 2019 doi.org/10.7326/M19-1324); conversely 4% of suicide attempts that do not use a firearm are fatal
- A 2019 study found that for each 10% increase in household gun ownership in a state, the youth suicide rate increased by more than 25%. **The single best predictor of suicide rate for a state was the proportion of homes containing a gun**; this was an even better predictor than the percentage of children who attempt suicide at the state level. (Knopov 2019 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2018.10.027)

<u>Unsafely stored firearms and their risk</u>

- Firearm homicide rate in the US is **25.2x higher than other industrialized countries**
- US gun owners possess 393.3 million weapons (rate of 120.5 firearms per 100 residents). We are the only country with more firearms than people
- 32% of Americans say they personally own a firearm according to the 2021 National Firearms Survey, equating to more than 81.4 million Americans owning guns
    - This number only includes adults over 18. When you include family members who live in their same household as a gun owner, that number jumps to 41% of all Americans.
    - **This number is one out of two households in Tennessee**
- Gun sales surged during the pandemic, increasing 40% in 2020 compared to 2019
- Personal protection is top cited reason for gun ownership, followed by hunting, sport shooting, collecting, and work
- **5.4 million children live in a household with at least 1 loaded, unlocked gun**
    - You will commonly see 4.6 million, but this number is based on an earlier study
- **The United States' rate of gun death among children is 36.5 times the overall rate observed in other high-income countries**

- Access to firearms doubles the risk for homicide victimization and makes it 5x more likely an abusive partner will kill his female victim

Interventions

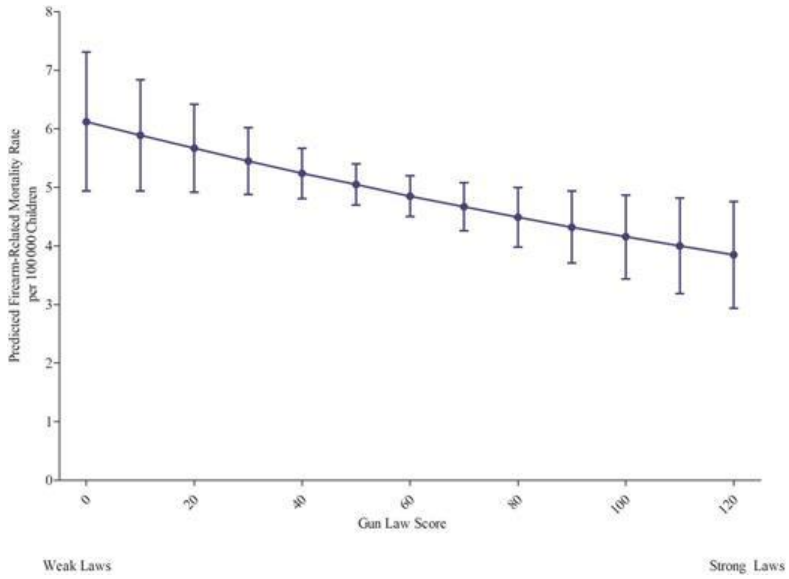
- What Works
    - **Secure Storage**
    - In incidents of gunfire on school grounds, 80% of shooters <18 retrieved the gun from the home of a friend or relative
    - Secure storage lowers the risk of gun deaths and injuries (Grossman 2005 doi:10.1001/jama.293.6.707)
        - 78% lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries
        - 85% lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries
    - A 2019 modeling study showed up to 32% of youth firearm deaths by suicide or unintentional injury could have been prevented by safely securing household firearms (Moneteaux 2019 doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.1078)
    - Firearm safety counseling with the provision of a tangible tool doubled the odds of safe firearm storage in the home compared to control groups (Barkin 2008 doi:10.1542/peds.2007-2611)
        - **Based on the evidence from this Safety Check study, implementing this approach nationwide could result in over 350,000 additional families safely securing their firearms with a subsequent 264,012 fewer children having a firearm-related injury each year**
- What Doesn't
    - **Education focused on children**
        - Hardy 2022: 70 children between ages 4 and 7 participated in a weeklong firearm safety program; following the training they were observed in pairs in which 53% were observed handling the gun. The intervention had no effect on the likelihood to play with the guns.
        - Himle 2004: programs were effective in having children repeat the safety message; however, skills weren't used in simulation setting
        - Himle 2004 and Kelso 2007 compared Eddie Eagle's passive learning to a more active behavior skills training program: increased knowledge, but no difference in children's behavior
        - Gatheridge 2004 found that children did have better behavior when observed following skills training compared to Eddie Eagle (n=30)

Firearm Legislation

- General
    - In a 5-year analysis of CDC WISQARS data a study found **that states with stricter gun laws had lower rates of firearm-related pediatric mortality** (adjusted incident rate ratio 0.96 [0.93–0.99]; for every 10-point increase in gun law score there was a 4% drop in firearm-related mortality rate) and **states with laws requiring universal background checks for firearm purchase in effect for ≥5 years had lower pediatric firearm-related**

mortality rates (adjusted incident rate ratio 0.65 [0.46–0.90]). (Goyal 2019 https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-3283; Figure 1 below)

Gun law score and predicted pediatric firearm-related mortality rates, 2011–2015.



- States with weaker gun laws have higher firearm-related mortality
  - Recent study by Everytown Research showed the group of states with weakest policies had nearly 3 times higher firearm mortality than group of states with strongest policies (https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/)

- Universal Background Checks
  - Support: **90% of Americans support universal background checks**.
  - Federal law only requires background checks when the gun seller is a licensed dealer leading to a dangerous loophole
    - Unlicensed private sellers, including sales at gun shows and online, aren't required to perform background checks on the people they sell guns to
    - 22% of American report acquiring a gun without a background check
    - Prospective online buyers are 7x more likely to fail a background check than other firearm purchasers or permit applicants
  - **States have enacted laws requiring background checks for unlicensed gun sales have lower rates of firearm homicide, suicides and gun trafficking**
  - HR 8: Bipartisan bill that would close loopholes in the background checks law
  - Passed the U.S. House of Representatives on March 11 with overwhelming support
- Secure Storage
  - In a study looking at pediatric (aged 0-14) firearm deaths from 1991-2016, more **stringent "negligence" Child Access Prevention laws (apply if a child accesses an improperly stored firearm, even if the child does not use the firearm) were associated with a 13% reduction in all-intent firearm fatalities, a 15% reduction in firearm homicides, a 12% reduction in firearm suicides, and a 13% reduction in unintentional firearm fatalities**, but less stringent "reckless" CAP laws (firearm owner is liable if a child injures another person only if someone provided the firearm to the child) did not show an association.

- ERPO (Extreme Risk Protection Order)
    - **85% of Americans support Extreme Risk Laws**
    - These laws empower law enforcement, family members, health professionals, and school administrators to work with courts to temporarily remove firearms from those who pose a danger to themselves or others
    - Establish a **civil process** that puts time and space between an at-risk individual and firearms
        - 19 states + DC have extreme risk laws
- Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (S. 2938) full text here
    - Passed the Senate with bipartisan support (15 Republicans, including Mitch McConnel, not Blackburn or Hagerty, however). Passed 234-193 in the House (including 14 Republicans, none from Tennessee). **Signed into law by President Biden on 6/25**.
    - Bill addresses the varying forms of gun violence, including mass shootings, domestic violence, gun suicide, and community gun violence
    - **Key points**
        - Enhance background checks for buyers under 21
        - Support state Extreme Risk Laws (provides $750 million in funding over 5 years)
        - Disarm domestic abusers (expands current gun possession/buying to those who abuse dating partners)
        - Clarify who must run background checks
        - Establish federal laws against interstate gun trafficking and straw purchasing
        - Fund community violence intervention programs ($250 million)
        - Invest in mental health services (school-based mental health, telehealth, and community crisis intervention)
        - School safety funding