

Gun Violence

DEFINITION

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

SIGNIFICANCE

Gun violence affects all children and youth, not only those who are victims and perpetrators. Gun violence threatens the psychological, emotional and social well-being of individuals, families and communities.¹

Teens are more likely to be killed by gun violence than older people in the U.S. Since the mid-1990s, gun homicide offender rates for children under age 17 have declined dramatically.² Between 1995 and 2005 in the U.S., the number of homicides committed by children under age 17 with a gun decreased by 60%, from 3,015 homicides in 1995 to 1,217 homicides in 2005. Up until age 17, the rate of deaths due to homicides involving guns increases with age. The rate decreases thereafter.³

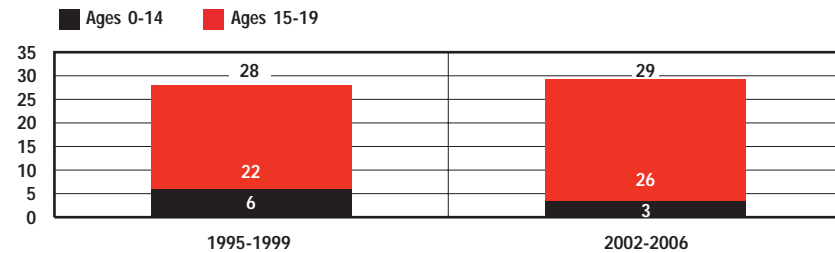
The gun death rate is still a cause of concern for children and youth. Nationally in 2004, youth ages 15 to 24 had a death rate due to firearms of 15.7 per 100,000 residents.⁴ The likelihood

of being a victim of gun violence is linked to gender and race. In the U.S., males ages 15 to 24 are almost 9 times as likely as their female peers to die as a result of gun violence. Black (80.7), Hispanic (32.4) and Native American (25.7) males ages 15 to 24 have a disproportionately higher firearm-related death rate per 100,000 residents than their White (14.3) and Asian (8.8) peers.⁵

Factors that place young people at risk for perpetration of violence include: a history of early aggression, poor supervision, exposure to violence in the home, parental drug/alcohol abuse, association with peers engaged in high-risk behavior, low commitment to school, school failure, diminished economic opportunity, high levels of transience and family disruption.⁶

In Rhode Island, between 2002 and 2006, there were 65 gun-related hospitalizations of children ages 1 to 19. Seventy-four percent (48) of the 65 hospitalizations were victims of assault, 20% (13) were victims of unintentional injuries, 2% (1) were hospitalized for a self-inflicted firearm injury, and 5% (3) were undetermined. There were 29 deaths of children ages 1 to 19 attributed to gun violence.⁷

Gun Deaths of Children Under Age 20, Rhode Island, 1995-1999 and 2002-2006



◆ Between 2002 and 2006 in Rhode Island, 90% of youth gun deaths were to teens ages 15 to 19, and 10% were to children under the age of 15.

◆ In Rhode Island between 2002 and 2006, there were 305 deaths of children under 20 years of age. Of these deaths, 10% were the result of a gun injury.

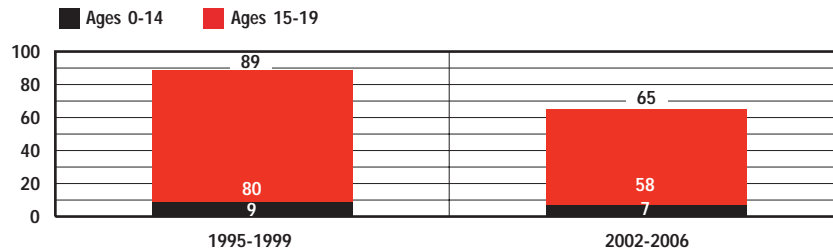
Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Health Statistics, federal Fiscal Years 1995-1999 and calendar years 2002-2006. Data for 2005 & 2006 are provisional.

Guns in the Home

◆ Research shows a strong correlation between firearm availability and firearm-related deaths and injuries among children and teens. The availability of guns in the home significantly increases the risk of suicide and unintentional injury for children and youth under age 20. The majority of the guns used in accidental shootings of children and youth originate in the residence of the victim, a relative or a friend.⁸

◆ In homes with guns, keeping a gun locked and unloaded and storing ammunition locked and in a separate location reduces the risk of gun injuries to children and teenagers.⁹

Gun-Related Hospitalizations of Children Under Age 20, Rhode Island, 1995-1999 and 2002-2006



◆ There were 65 gun-related hospitalizations between 2002 and 2006 of children under age 20. Since the late-1990s, gun-related hospitalizations of children ages 0-19 fell by 27%.

◆ Seventy-four percent (48) of the 65 youth hospitalized between 2002 and 2006 for gun-related injuries were residents of the core cities (62% from Providence, 8% from Pawtucket, 2% from Central Falls, 2% from Newport, and 2% from Woonsocket).

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Health Statistics, federal Fiscal Years 1995-1999 and calendar years 2002-2006. Gun deaths data for 2005 & 2006 are provisional.

Weapon Carrying among Rhode Island Public High School Students, 2007

	Females	Males	Total
Carried a gun, knife, or club at least once in the past 30 days	5%	19%	12%
Carried a gun, knife, or club at least once on school property in the past 30 days	2%	8%	5%
Were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property at least once in the past 12 months	6%	10%	8%

Source: 2007 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Health Statistics.

◆ In Rhode Island in 2007, 12% of high school students reported they carried a weapon in the 30 days preceding the survey, compared to 19% of high school students nationally in 2005.^{10, 11} In 2007, 20% of Rhode Island middle students surveyed reported that they have carried a weapon.¹²

Preventing Youth Gun Violence

No single policy or effort will end youth gun violence. However, several strategies implemented simultaneously can mitigate the number of instances and the lethality of gun violence among children and youth.

◆ Reduce the exposure of children and youth to guns in the home by educating parents about the risks that guns pose to their children and increasing awareness of safety measures. The best way to prevent firearm injuries among children and youth is to remove guns from the home.¹³

◆ Reduce children and youth's exposure to guns in the media by increasing parental monitoring of television programming and limiting the time children spend watching television, playing video games and accessing the computer.¹⁴

References

- ¹⁴ Reich, K., Culross, P. L., & Behrman, R. E. (2002). Children, youth, and gun violence: Analysis and recommendations. *The Future of Children: Children, Youth and Gun Violence*, 12(2), 5-23.
- ⁷ Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Health Statistics, 2002-2006. Data for 2005 & 2006 are provisional.
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- ²³ Fox, J. A. & Zawitz, M. W. (2007). *Homicide trends in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- ^{10,12} *Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey, summary table, weighted data.* (2007). Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis.
- ⁴⁵ National Center for Health Statistics. (2007). *Health, United States, 2007 with chartbook on trends in the health of Americans*. Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics.
- ¹¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. (2007). *Youth violence: Facts at a glance*. Retrieved January 21, 2008 from www.cdc.gov/injury
- ⁶ U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control. (2007). *Youth violence: Fact sheet*. Retrieved January 21, 2008 from www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/yfacts.htm.