

Playdates & Gun Safety

Clinician Guidance to Start Conversations

Talking About Gun Safety Saves Lives

It can be difficult for parents of kids of all ages to ask other parents about firearms and storage practices. About 40% of US households with children have a firearm in the house, but [fewer than 50% of these households store all firearms locked and unloaded](#).

More than half of parents do not ask other parents if there are firearms in the house or if firearms are stored safely. The [most common reason that parents don't ask is that they just did not think about doing so](#). In most cases where an unintentional shooting occurs, the shooter was playing with a gun or showing it to someone else, and most of the time it was loaded and unlocked.

[All sources of firearm safety information increase caregivers asking about firearms in households their children frequent; each distinct source increases asking by 40%](#). This underscores the importance of repeated messaging from multiple distinct sources as a firearm injury prevention strategy.

Take Action & Start the Conversation with Your Patients

Pediatricians are a trusted source of information, and we can help get the word out there that parents should ask about firearms just as they would ask about other safety issues, such as which adult will be supervising the children or if there were any food allergies. [In 20% of cases where a child dies from an unintentional shooting](#), it occurred at a friend's house.

Additionally, ICAAP has prepared flyers with information about parents asking other parents about safe storage. One is geared towards parents with younger children, and one for parents of adolescents. We also encourage you to check out [ICAAP's firearm violence prevention page](#) and ICAAP's social media pages on Facebook and Instagram for more information.

Other valuable resources include [Be SMART](#) and [ASK Day](#).

CITATIONS

Samaa Kemal, Carly Menker, Tyler Lennon, Michelle L. Macy, Karen M. Sheehan, Megan M. Attridge, Audrey G. Brewer, Marie E. Heffernan; Factors Associated With Parents Asking Other Parents About Firearms in the Home. *Pediatrics* December 2024; 154 (6): e2024068061. 10.1542/peds.2024-068061

Maya Haasz, Matthew G. Myers, Patrick M. Carter, Kelsey Gastineau, Rebecca L. Sokol; Caregivers Asking About Firearms in Homes Their Children Visit. *Pediatrics* 2025; 10.1542/peds.2025-071373

AAP Video. A family without firearms learns how to ask other families about their storage practices before their children go over to play (toddlers to school age): <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/gun-safety-and-injury-prevention/safe-storage-of-firearms/learning-to-ask/>

ICAAP's firearm violence prevention page: <https://illinoisap.org/firearmviolence/>

Miller M, Azrael D. Firearm storage in US households with children. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(2):e2148823

Wilson RF, Mintz S, Blair JM, Betz CJ, Collier A, Fowler KA. Unintentional Firearm Injury Deaths Among Children and Adolescents Aged 0–17 Years — National Violent Death Reporting System, United States, 2003–2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2023;72:1338–1345.

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