



# ***Keep It Safe & Secure Practices Guide***

## ***Gun Safety Steps to Protect Children from Gun-Related Violence and Tragedies***

### **WHAT IS THE PROBLEM**


While as many as one third of American households own guns, approximately half of those households don't lock up their guns, including 40 percent of households with kids under age 18.<sup>i</sup> As we have seen countless times in the news, easy access to a firearm when someone wants to hurt themselves or others can result in tragic loss. In fact, in approximately 80% of school associated firearm homicides and suicides, the firearms used were accessed from the user's home or from a friend or relative.<sup>ii</sup> Further, a gun in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in a homicide, suicide, or unintentional shooting than it is to be used in self-defense.<sup>iii</sup>

While SHP supports the right to own firearms, we believe a significant number of gun-related violence, suicides and unintentional deaths could be prevented if firearms were better secured by their owners. More awareness needs to be raised on meaningful practices gun owners and non-gun-owners can take to better protect children and youth.

### **WHAT ACTIONS CAN WE TAKE**

SHP "Keep It Safe & Secure" practices, which were developed working with gun owners, promote the importance of safely securing and storing all firearms as well as steps to take when a child comes across an unsecured firearm. Start today by taking 2-simple steps:

1. Ensure Firearms are Accessible to You and Who You Authorize: When firearms are not in use, they must be stored safely and securely so that only you and who you authorize has access to them. This means choosing methods that ensure no one else can access your firearms. Hiding or storing unsecured firearms does not work – research has shown that kids know where your guns are located. There are a significant number of solutions to choose from that provide access without leaving a firearm unsecured. Firearm manufacturers, organizations and owners have suggested, including storing your guns inside a locked firearm case/safe or with a trigger lock separate from ammunition.
2. Teach your kids what to do if they see a gun: No matter how much we want to protect our children, we can't be with them at every moment. In the event that your child comes across a gun when they are not with you, they should know what to do. Teach your child that guns are not toys and they are dangerous if someone who isn't trained uses them. Teach and reinforce to your children that they should tell an adult if they see a gun in school, and if they see a gun in any situation, they should not touch it, leave the area, and tell an adult immediately.

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<sup>i</sup> Johnson, Renee, Tamera Coyne-Beasley, Carol Runyan, "Firearm Ownership and Storage Practices, U.S. Households, 1992–2002: A Systematic Review," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 27:2 (2007): 173-182

<sup>ii</sup> Reza, A., Modzeleski, W., Feucht, T., Anderson, M., Simon, T.R., & Barrios, L. (2003). Source of firearms used in school-associated violent deaths- United State, 1992-1999. *MMWR*, 52(9), 169-172

<sup>iii</sup> Kellermann, Arthur L.MD, MPH, et al. "Injuries and Deaths Due to Firearms in the Home." *Journal of Trauma, Injury, Infection, and Critical Care* 45 (1998): 263-67