

Gun safety not part of many parents' conversations with kids

November 9 2010, By Jessica Soulliere



As many as one-half of American households have a gun and nearly 30 children are injured or killed every day by firearms in the United States - most from guns owned by the child's family or friends.

In August 2010, the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health asked 1,621 [parents](#) about gun ownership and if they have talked about gun safety with their children.

The poll found that one-third of respondents with children, age 5-17, report having a gun in the household. Of parents with guns in their homes, 82 percent said they have discussed gun safety with their children—most within the past year. In contrast, only 48 percent of

parents without guns in their household have ever discussed gun safety with their children.

Eighteen percent of gun-owning parents say they have never talked with their children about gun safety and 52 percent of parents who do not have a gun at home have never talked with the children about gun safety.

“With firearms in about one-third of the approximately 35 million U.S. households with children under 18, discussing gun safety is something all parents need to consider,” says Matthew Davis, M.D., director of the poll and associate professor of pediatrics and internal medicine in the Child Health Evaluation and Research Unit at the U-M Medical School.

“Parents in non-gun-owning households simply cannot assume that their children will never encounter a situation involving firearms.”

Regardless of gun ownership, parents who have talked to their children about gun safety guidelines are more confident that their kids will practice gun safety than parents who have not talked with their children.

When asked, “How worried are you that your child could get hurt with a gun when at a friend’s home?” 19 percent of parents say “very worried.” Among gun owning parents, only 10 percent are very worried, compared with 24 percent of parents who do not own a gun.

“When more than half of non-gun owning parents have never discussed gun safety with their children and nearly 1 in 5 gun-owning parents have never discussed gun safety with their children, many children may be unprepared to understand and follow the basics of gun safety,” Davis says. “Parents need to learn how to talk to their children about gun safety whether they own a gun or not, to be sure their children are prepared should they ever encounter a situation where a gun is present.”

Davis says parents should look for age-appropriate education materials

to emphasize the basic principles of gun safety and discuss them with their [children](#). Some basic gun safety tips include:

- Never point a gun at anyone, even if you think it is not loaded.
- Only use a gun when you are with an adult.

Provided by University of Michigan

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