



How to talk about gun safety in the home

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4.6

million children in the U.S. live in homes with unlocked and loaded guns.

Source: National Firearm Survey, 2021

To help prevent kids in your community from experiencing gun violence, one thing you can do is talk with other concerned adults about secure gun storage. If you're a parent talking with another parent, you may also find our parent-to-parent conversation guide helpful.

Many people don't know that home gun safety measures are a proven way to prevent gun-related deaths and injuries—including unintentional shootings, gun suicides, and intentional shootings. Conversations about preventing access to guns can help others understand the risks and encourage them to secure the guns in their home.

How to start the conversation

It's common for people to have strong feelings about gun-related issues, but we can all agree on the importance of protecting kids from gun violence. Approach the conversation calmly and with that shared goal in mind.

"The kids in our community deserve to grow up without experiencing gun violence."

"I've been hearing a lot about kids and gun violence in the news lately, and it really worries me. I care about the safety of everyone around us and want to do what I can to help prevent that from happening here."

"Making it harder for a young person in crisis to access a gun can give them the time and space to avoid making a life-changing decision."

Talk about gun safety in the home

If you're a gun owner, sharing the steps you take to ensure home gun safety can help to normalize these conversations. And if you don't own guns, you can talk with other adults about secure gun storage and why having conversations about access to guns is important.

"If you know anyone with unlocked guns at home, please encourage them to start locking their guns. Gun safety in the home can save lives."

"Gun storage may look different for everyone, but locking all of your guns is a great first step in home safety and preventing unintended access."

"Anyone can experience a moment of crisis, so it's important to put time and space between a person in crisis and a gun. Storing guns securely can keep loved ones safe."

End Family Fire

Secure firearm storage saves lives. [Learn how storing guns in your home securely can prevent unintentional shootings, gun suicides, and some intentional shootings by visiting EndFamilyFire.org.](https://endfamilyfire.org)

Recognizing the signs that someone is in crisis

When discussing secure gun storage in the home, it's also important to consider the kids in your life and their wellbeing. When a child or teen is in crisis, they may seek out an unsecured gun with the intent to harm themselves or others. It may not always be obvious when someone is struggling, but if the adults in a child's life know the signs that someone may be in crisis, they can intervene and connect them with support.

"If a young person talks about having access to a gun, always take it seriously. They may be thinking of harming themselves or others."

"If a child's behavior has changed, and they seem angry, aggressive, or more isolated, it's urgent to make sure they don't have access to a gun."

"If you're concerned about a child's wellbeing and whether they may have access to a gun, act immediately. You can talk to their parents or a school official."

Gun violence prevention: know the warning signs

When a child or teen is in crisis, it's dangerous for them to have access to a gun because they might use it to harm themselves or others. [Learn the warning signs at AgreeToAgree.org/Resources/Gun-Violence-Prevention-Warning-Signs](https://AgreeToAgree.org/Resources/Gun-Violence-Prevention-Warning-Signs).

After the chat

- Encourage others to keep the conversation going. Sharing information about secure gun storage and the signs that a child is in crisis are practical ways to help prevent gun violence.
- If anyone asks questions you aren't sure how to answer, let them know you will try to find answers and get back to them. Check [our resources page at AgreeToAgree.org/Resources](https://AgreeToAgree.org/Resources) to learn more about gun violence and how people can work together to prevent it.

Tips for having productive conversations

- Remember that everyone's thoughts, feelings, and experiences matter. No matter how someone feels about gun ownership or secure gun storage, it's important to listen to their perspective.
- Avoid letting the conversation turn political. Keep the focus on community safety and protecting children from gun violence.
- Express gratitude. "I know this can be an awkward conversation, and I appreciate that you were willing to have it."

**If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis,
call or text 988 to be connected with the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.**

Learn how to have the conversation at [AgreeToAgree.org](https://www.agreetoagree.org)

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