

Talking About Responsible Gun Storage

Owning a gun is a personal decision, but responsible storage is a public safety issue. Kids and unsecured guns are a potentially lethal combination. Fortunately, a simple conversation can help keep children out of harm's way. It can feel strange or awkward to bring up the issue of how guns are stored, but it shouldn't. Here are some things to keep in mind when you start the conversation.

MAKE IT PART OF A GENERAL SAFETY DISCUSSION

- **EXAMPLE:** "Before I drop off John for his play date, I just wanted to check to see if you have a pet, a pool or firearms in your house. I want to make sure he knows your safety rules."
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DON'T WAIT TO BE ASKED: VOLUNTEER INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR OWN HOME

- **EXAMPLE:** "We have a pool, with an alarm and locked gate; no pets or guns in our home" OR "Just want you to know we have a dog and a cat, in case Mary has allergies. We also have a hunting rifle, but we always keep it locked and unloaded in a safe."
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REMEMBER: IT'S NOT ABOUT THE GUN; IT'S ABOUT WHETHER IT'S SECURED

- **EXAMPLE:** "May I ask, if you have guns in your home, are they locked and inaccessible to the kids?"
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USE TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

- If you don't want to talk face-to-face, have the conversation via email or text.
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DON'T FORGET TO TALK TO FAMILY

- Many unintentional shootings happen in the homes of the child's relatives. It's very possible that family members or close friends have unsecured guns in their home. Never make assumptions when a child's safety is at stake.