

Campaign increases likelihood parents will ask about guns before a playdate

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The Asking Saves Kids (ASK) campaign is effective in increasing parents' comfort level in asking if there is a gun where their child plays, according to research being presented at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) 2017 National Conference & Exhibition in Chicago Monday, Sept. 18.

"Gun violence is a public health epidemic in the United States, but a simple question or short conversation about gun [safety](#) can protect children from this danger," said lead author Nina Agrawal MD, FAAP. "This study shows us that parents are far more likely to ask about guns in a home before a playdate if they feel empowered by their pediatricians to do so, and asking can save precious young lives."

The AAP recommends that physicians talk to families about gun safety as part of routine injury-prevention guidance, just like they counsel families about child safety seats, safe sleep and water safety. The ASK campaign encourages caregivers to ask [family](#) and friends if there is a gun where their child plays and, if a gun is present, to ensure that it is locked with the ammunition separately.

The study was conducted in the South Bronx neighborhood of New York, a neighborhood with high rates of gun violence. Nine percent of participants said they knew someone who was the victim of gun violence.

Pediatric residents talked with families visiting a health clinic about why

it's important to ask about the presence of guns where their child will play, and gave tips on having this conversation. Participants also received a brochure. Prior to receiving ASK education, only 8 percent of caregivers had asked about guns in a home where their child was playing, and only 44 percent felt comfortable asking if there is a gun where their child plays. After learning about the ASK campaign, 85 percent of caregivers said they felt comfortable asking about guns.

This study demonstrated that the ASK campaign is effective in increasing caregivers' comfort level in asking if there is a gun where their [child](#) plays, Dr. Agrawal said.

Only 11 percent of caregivers reported a doctor provided gun safety information to them, but 96 percent of caregivers said they wanted their doctor to provide it.

"It's stunning to note that 9 percent of the children whose families were involved in this study knew a victim of [gun violence](#), which shows how common this health crisis is in communities of need. Pediatricians should engage their patients and families in conversations about this important topic so that parents know that they can and should be asking about [gun safety](#)," Dr. Agrawal said. "Families we interviewed overwhelmingly told us that they wanted their pediatricians to provide this information to them."

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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