

Teens and Firearm Safety

Firearms appear in many popular movies, television programs, and games, so it's natural for children and youth to be interested and curious about them. For teens, guns may even seem cool or like a fun hobby to get into.

Healthy Youth Survey results show that Washington youth feel like they have **easier access** to handguns than in previous years.



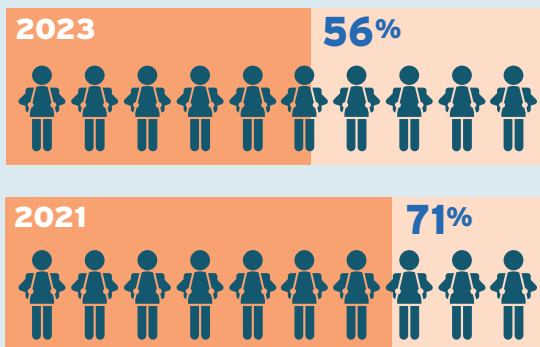
Firearm Access

10th graders reporting **sort of** or **very easy** access to handguns were almost **5 times** more likely to carry a weapon at school than those who perceived less access. Carrying weapons at school is linked to perceived access at home.

1 in 3 10th graders who reported **sort of easy** or **very easy** access to handguns also experienced depressive feelings in the past year. Access to handguns is especially dangerous for youth experiencing mental health challenges.

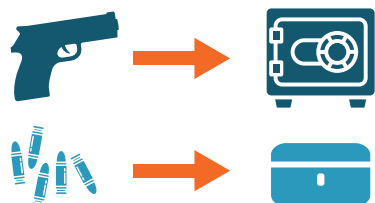
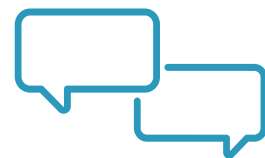


In 2023, only **56%** of 10th graders felt it would be **very hard** to get a handgun if they wanted one, compared to **71%** in 2021.



Talk to your Teen

Have a conversation about how depictions of firearms on TV and video games are not always accurate. Gun safety and responsible handling can look different in the real world. Use a caring and non-judgmental tone. Keep conversations casual.



Store it Safely

Keep unloaded guns and ammo in separate, locked containers out of children's and teenagers' reach and sight. A child-resistant lock should be used to safeguard weapons.

A firearm should always be kept on your person and within your control while it is not being stored. Remove any firearms from the home if a family member, including a child or teen, is experiencing a crisis and could endanger themselves or others.