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Firearms Now No. 1 Cause Of Death For U.S. Children — While Drug Poisoning Enters Top 5

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TOPLINE The percentages of children dying from firearms and drug poisonings have increased over the past 10 years, according to new research from the [American Association of Pediatrics](#), adding onto the ongoing conversation and concerns around gun violence and drug abuse among children.



The National Gun Violence Memorial opened last summer at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in ... [+] AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

KEY FACTS

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- Firearm fatalities increased by 87.1% over a 10-year period, from 1,311 deaths in 2011 to 2,590 deaths in 2021, the AAP found, beating out car accidents as the leading cause of death of children and teenagers in the U.S.
- The researchers found that drug poisoning ranked as the fourth leading cause of death for those under 18, with fatalities among the youth increasing by 133.3% over the same 10-year period.
- Other top causes of children's death include drowning, which didn't change much over the past decade, and suffocation, which was up 12.5%.
- Researchers analyzed fatal injury data for those under 18 between 2011 and 2021 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics.

CRUCIAL QUOTE

“Targeted interventions, such as strengthening legislation, enhancing public awareness, and improving health care systems are needed to address both fatal and nonfatal injuries among children, but these efforts alone are likely not sufficient, given the myriad societal forces that impact pediatric injuries,” the study authors said.

KEY BACKGROUND

According to nonprofit Gun Violence Archive, [1,335](#) people under 18 died of gun violence so far this year. Along with over 1,300 children and teens dying from gun violence, GVA estimates there's been over 520 mass shootings. This year is on track to be the deadliest since the organization began tracking this data in 2014. Furthermore, drug overdoses have claimed the lives of at least

[106,000](#) people so far this year, CDC data shows. President Joe Biden earlier this year issued an [executive order](#) to limit gun violence by ensuring all required background checks are conducted before gun purchases, among other features. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, there have been [600](#) bills introduced this legislative season related to [fentanyl](#)—the synthetic opioid that is more powerful than both morphine and heroin and is often mixed with cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine when distributed illegally. At least 103 of those bills have become law.

FURTHER READING

[More Than 500 Killed In Mass Shootings This Year—Most In At Least Ten Years](#) (Forbes)

[Mass Shootings Steadily Increased Over Last 50 Years—And Big States Like California And Texas Face Highest Risk, Study Finds](#) (Forbes)

[U.S. Passes 400 Mass Shootings In 2023—On Pace For Deadliest Year](#) (Forbes)

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