

Universal Background Checks for Gun Purchases

OVERVIEW

Current federal law requires background checks to be performed for anyone purchasing a firearm at a federally licensed gun dealer—however only 40% of guns sold in the US are sold through a federally licensed dealer.

In most states, sales at gun shows, flea markets, and private gun sales are not subject to regulations.

States with universal background check laws require that all sales of firearms take place through a licensed dealer who can perform a background check prior to the sale.


AAP POSITION

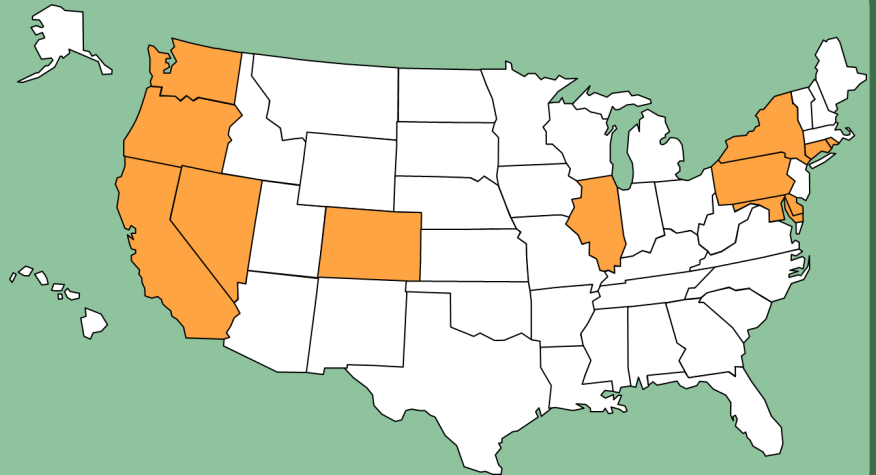
- The AAP is committed to protecting children from firearm-related injury and violence.
- The absence of guns in homes and communities is the most reliable and effective measure to prevent firearm-related injuries in children and adolescents.
- To prevent gun-related death and injuries, the AAP recommends that pediatricians provide firearm safety counseling to patients and their families.
- The AAP supports a number of specific measures to reduce the destructive effects of guns in the lives of children and adolescents, including the regulation of the manufacture, sale, purchase, ownership, storage, and use of firearms.
- In addition to background checks for purchasers, other measures aimed at regulating access of guns should include mandatory waiting periods, closure of the gun show loophole, and mental health restrictions for gun purchases.

FACTS

- 30% of guns involved in criminal trafficking are connected to gun shows, where background checks aren't required. The trafficking of guns generally involves a highly efficient, organized, and profitable business that moves guns from legal manufacture to dealers to criminals and young people who can't buy guns legally.
- In states that require a background check for private handgun sales, there are 48% fewer firearm suicides, while the rates of suicide by other methods are nearly identical.
- According to Johns Hopkins University researchers, the 2007 repeal of Missouri's background check requirement was associated with a 25% increase in the gun homicide rate.
- 88% of those surveyed in the US, including 85% of gun owners, favor universal background checks on sales of all weapons.

PROGRESS

- 12 states and DC— laws requiring universal background checks for firearms purchases



For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact the AAP Division of State Government Affairs at stgov@aap.org.

MORE

- [AAP Policy—Firearm-Related Injuries in the Pediatric Population](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/5/e1416.full)—<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/5/e1416.full>
- [AAP Division of State Government Affairs—State Gun Safety Laws](http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/GunSafetyLaws.pdf)—<http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/GunSafetyLaws.pdf>
- [Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence](http://www.bradycampaign.org)—www.bradycampaign.org
- [Everytown for Gun Safety](http://www.everytown.org)—www.everytown.org
- [Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](http://smartgunlaws.org)—<http://smartgunlaws.org>
- [Children's Defense Fund \(CDF\)—Protect Children, Not Guns](http://www.childrensdefense.org/campaigns/protect-children-not-guns)—www.childrensdefense.org/campaigns/protect-children-not-guns