



For Immediate Release

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***Office of the Child Advocate Releases Report on Connecticut Child Fatalities and Injuries by Guns  
2001 - 2012***

Jamey Bell, State Child Advocate, released today the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) report, *"12 Years of Child Gun Deaths and Injuries in Connecticut"*. The report draws from child fatality data from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and child injury data from the Connecticut Hospital Association.

The report provides a look at the 94 Connecticut children aged 2 – 17 who died from guns during the last twelve years, including who they were and where and how they died, in order to inform policy makers seeking to prevent these deaths in the future. The data showed that the highest incidence of fatalities were in boys, aged 15 -17, and that almost half of the fatalities occurred in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. Most of the gun deaths were due to homicides.

The report provides a similar look at the 924 children aged 0 – 17 who suffered gun-related injuries in the 12-year period. Of these 924 gun-related injuries, 88.3% occurred among boys, 94% occurred between the ages of 12-17 years, 61.6% of the gun-related injuries occurred to Black children, and 63% of the injuries occurred in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport.

The OCA urges policy makers to take into account that, from what is currently known, the circumstances of the deaths of the 20 very young children who died in the mass shooting in Newtown and the other 74 deaths are very different. Rather than mass shootings, the other 74 gun deaths, and the vast majority of gun injuries in Connecticut, are single incidents. They also mirror the profile of child gun deaths and injuries across the nation: injuries to and deaths of children from guns are overwhelmingly among male adolescents 15 years old and older, and compared to their proportion of the population, they are disproportionately Black and Hispanic children.

"Policy changes to prevent deaths and injuries of children by guns will need to address the different contexts and contributing factors," Bell said. "Turning the tide won't be easy or quick, but focused and sustained efforts of all stakeholders and systems that touch children will allow all our children to grow safely into adulthood."

Faith Vos Winkel, Assistant Child Advocate responsible for child fatality review and primary prevention efforts, said, “We need research on the causes and effects of gun violence. We must have a thoughtful, committed and inclusive examination of the use of and access to firearms by civilians, as well as the use of and access to mental health services that are trauma-informed.”

The OCA makes four recommendations based upon the data and information that is currently available:

1. Connecticut policymakers and residents should support state level and national level research to understand the root causes of gun violence and how to prevent it.
2. Policymakers should strengthen Connecticut’s assault weapons ban, and otherwise control access to guns by increasing requirements for background checks, registration, storage and safety, and permits/licenses to carry; by regulating gun shows; and by prohibiting sales of guns and ammunition to Connecticut residents via the internet;
3. Policymakers should work deeply and collaboratively within local communities in multidisciplinary efforts involving law enforcement, mental health, social services, child welfare, education, judicial, and public health, to both support these communities as they heal from such tragedies, and understand and implement ways to prevent future episodes of gun violence.
4. Policymakers should establish a long term working group charged with evaluating the state’s community based capacity to a) respond to traumatic events and b) assist local communities/municipalities in the development of trauma prevention and response strategies.

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**About OCA:** OCA speaks out on behalf of Connecticut’s children. Through our unique access to information, the OCA investigates concerns about the provision of state funded services and advocates both administratively and legislatively for practice and policy change to ensure the special rights of children. For assistance, call [1-800-994-0939](tel:1-800-994-0939), or e-mail OCA at [oca@ct.gov](mailto:oca@ct.gov). For general information, visit OCA’s website at [www.ct.gov/OCA](http://www.ct.gov/OCA).

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