

Hey, thank you so much for taking the time to join us here today today.

I'm going to be talking to you about be smart, which is a program that was developed by Moms Demand Action for gun sense in America to encourage conversation among parents and all adults who are concerned about kids and guns and safety. My name is Kirsten.

I've been part of the be smart program here in Nevada for about two years now and I think be smart is always a We important conversation to be having but it's definitely been incredibly important during these covid times when so many of us are spending more time at home.

So many of our kids are spending more time at home, and we really need to be doing everything we can to make sure we're keeping our kids safe.

I wanted to start by just providing a little bit of data to contextualize the impact that Firearms have on our children here in the United States in the u.s.

Firearms are the second leading cause of death for children and they are the first leading cause of death for black children and here in Nevada Firearms are actually the leading cause of death for children as well as this slide shows nearly 1,600 children under the age of 18 are killed with guns in the United States every year.

That's an average of four children a day when children in the US are killed with guns the majority of those deaths 52 percent.

So it's about 800 children are homicides additionally more than 600 children died by suicide every year and another a hundred children are unintentionally shot and killed so we know that approximately 4.6 million children in the u.s.

Lived in a household with that least one loaded unlocked gun and while School a shootings and mass shootings typically make National headlines.

The reality is that for children under the age of 13 gun homicides most frequently occur in the home one study showed that nearly 90% of unintentional shooting deaths and injuries among children under the age of 15 occurred in the home furthermore when there are those incidents of gun fire on school grounds up to 80% of Shooters who were under the age of 18 obtained the gun or the guns the Used from their home or from the home of a friend or a relative.

So I want to take a minute and just acknowledge that this is an emotional issue and all of us here today may be coming at this with different backgrounds and different experiences many of us are parents or caregivers.

Some of us are gun owners.

Some of us are not you may have had a personal experience with guns and some of you may have even been impacted by gun violence.

We believe that most gun owners want to be responsible gun owners. So we're here today to talk about what all of us whether we own guns or not can do to make sure that children don't have unsupervised access to guns.

We're going to leave politics at the door right now and just agree on three things.

We all want kids to grow up happy and healthy every one of us has the right to make responsible decisions about how we're going to protect our families our homes and our communities including whether or not we choose to have a gun in the home and that if we can prevent even one child gun death or injury, it's our responsibility to do so, we're not going to talk about laws or policies today.

So let's set that aside.

I'd I want to take a minute to talk specifically about what the consequences of unsecured gun in the home.

Looks like this slide shows a handful of headlines from stories from across the country and we all know that there are many more stories that are similar to these that go unreported every year.

Some of you may remember from the news the story that's in the top left corner there in January of 2018.

There was a shooting at Marshall County High School in Kentucky more than a dozen students were shot and wounded and two of them Bailey hole and Preston cope were killed the 16 year old Shooter had gained access to his stepfathers unsecured pistol from his bedroom.

The next tragedy took place in May of 2018 when a four year old boy from Louisa, Virginia and intentionally shot his two year old brother Tyson after he was able to access an unsecured gun that was stored high and an upper cabinet.

The next three on the bottom left talks about what happens when kids who are looking to carry guns out of fear have easy access to Firearms, which can actually facilitate the cycle of violence.

Seventeen-year-old Zeki from Jackson, Mississippi told the Jackson Free Press that some young people in his community carry guns because they're scared of being robbed or shot and they believe that having a gun will allow them to defend themselves. And then our final story is about 13 year old Mikey from Brewster New York.

Mikey was a friendly popular 8th grader.

He loved to bowl.

He was an avid athlete and he loved to play video games in January of 2013.

Mikey came home from school.

He took one of his father's unlocked loaded guns and he shot himself his family knew my key to be a happy kid, and they don't believe that he planned to die that day but with ease

Access to a loaded gun Mikey made an impulsive decision that tragically became a fatal one.

So all four of these stories show The Fallout of what can happen when young people get their hands on unsecured guns.

None of these stories are quite the same, but they're all tragic and they're all preventable.

So how can we prevent incidents like this?

This is really where the beasts Mark program comes in.

So it's important to remember that even if you are practicing

secure so gun storage, or if you don't have a gun in your home, you can't be sure about other homes and you can't be sure about how responsible other people are being.

And so that's where we use be smart.

The asked and be smart stands for secure your guns in homes and vehicles.

So 13 million households with children in the United States contain at least one gun in the majority of children who live in those gun owning households know where the gun is stored. I mentioned just a few minutes ago that we already know that when there is gonna fire on school grounds if the shooter is under the age of 18 the majority of them obtained the gun or the guns that were used from their home or from the home of a friend or a relative like that shooting that unfolded at Marshall County High School in Kentucky that I mentioned just a minute ago.

So what does it mean to secure a gun guns should always be stored locked and unloaded with the ammunition stored separately.

And I want to be clear that hiding a gun is not the same thing as secure in your gun.

We know that that can lead to tragedy we talked about the four year old boy in Virginia who unintentionally shot his two-year-old brother after he was able to access an unsecured gun. That was just hidden away high in an upper cabinet.

We can also think about Zeki from Mississippi who shared some of the complicated safety reasons that might push teens to want a gun.

We need to keep in mind that kids are going to feel a variety of emotions about guns from Curiosity to have Fascination to fear and so as adults it's always our responsibility to prevent easy access to guns.

The research does show us that Secure Storage is associated with a decreased risk of firearm suicide and unintentional firearm injury among children one study showed that households that locked both their firearms and their ammunition.

How do you 78 percent lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries among children and teens and an 85 percent lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries.

Some commonly used Secure Storage practices include using a cable lock a lock box or a firearm safe again as well as always storing Firearms unloaded with the ammunition storage separately and secure guns aren't just a problem in the home.

They also contribute to this staggering number of guns that are stolen each year an estimated.

380,000 guns are stolen from private gun owners every year and gun owners were three times.

More likely to have a gun stolen if they had carried a gun in the last month.

The research also tells us that nearly one-quarter of stolen guns are taken from Cars.

So storing a gun in a glove compartment or underneath a car seat is not considered to be Secure Storage the m and be smart stands for modeling responsible behavior.

Every law-abiding adult has the right to decide whether or

not to have a gun in the home, but we can't rely on Curious Kids not to find a gun as we saw on the slide before Studies have shown that the majority of children are aware of where their parents store their guns and more than a third of children and gun owning households reported handling their parents guns many doing so without the knowledge of their parents nearly a quarter of the parents in that study did not know that their children had handled the gun in the house.

So it is always an adult's responsibility to prevent unauthorized access to guns not the responsibility of a curious child to avoid them.

It's definitely important to talk to your kids about gun safety. We encourage that but remember that that's a precaution and it's not a guarantee one study found that young children who had gone through a week-long gun safety training were just as likely as children who had not taken that training to approach and play with that.

Handgun when they found one so modeling responsible behavior means that as smart adults were making sure that kids don't have the opportunity to access guns.

Now, we all know that we can't control the environment that our kids are in all the time.

So again, you should teach your children not to touch a gun if they come across one whether it's real or pretend and give them tools to help them get out of dangerous situations and alert an adult if they're if they're in a place where they don't feel Comfortable but as adults it's our responsibility

to do everything we can to prevent those dangerous situations from arising to begin with our website be smart for kids.org has handouts with tips on age-appropriate ways to talk to your children and your teenagers about guns.

So I would encourage you to check that out.

The A and be smart stands for ask so as I mentioned a minute ago, there are practice.

There are approximately 4.6 million children in the u.s.

That live in a household with at least one loaded unlocked gun. And so that's why you need to ask about firearms in the other homes that your child visits.

If you're a parent or a caretaker, there are probably already a number of things that you asked about before you let your child go to another house.

You might ask about food allergies.

You might ask about rules around screen time or television.

You might ask who's going to be supervising the children or about car seats if there's a transportation and we just want to encourage you to make gun safety part of that regular safety conversation that you're having any time your child goes to another house.

I know it can seem awkward at first and email or text can be a good way to bring this up if it makes you feel uncomfortable, but we do want to normalize the process of talking about guns and just making that part of the safety conversation that you're having when your children go to another home.

The R&B smart stands for recognizing the role of guns and

suicide access to a gun can mean the difference between life and death.

We saw that in my key story and as our children get older you may also need to reconsider your storage methods.

If you have been using a simple cable lock to secure your guns, you might want to think about getting a gun safe.

We all know how curious children can be and as they go get older and they get more resourceful.

We may need to rethink our gun storage methods and act accordingly.

Also, if you know that you have a loved one who is in distress, you might want to temporarily consider removing a gun from your home consider the following information.

Most people who attempt suicide do not die unless they use a gun 90% of suicide attempts with a gun result in death, which is a much higher fatality rate than any other means Self harm and this contributes to the fact that 40 percent of child suicides involve a gun.

So if you are going to consider temporarily removing a gun from your home, what are some of your options?

What can you do with it?

You can contact local law enforcement law enforcement in your area may be willing to temporarily store your guns for you. You can also contact a licensed gun dealer or a gun range and see if they will temporarily store your guns and finally you can consider temporarily storing your guns in the home of a friend or a family member.

And if you do that, we want to encourage you to manage risk

on behalf of that friend or family member who storing the gun for you to provide the gun to them locked up and not offer the key or the code that would unlock that box.

The National Youth survey conducted by the CDC the Centers for Disease Control showed that 17 percent of high school students had seriously considered attempting suicide in the last year and one study showed that 41 percent of adolescents and gun owning households reported having easy access to the guns in their home.

But as we discussed earlier research shows that responsible Firearms storage is associated with a significantly decreased risk of child firearm suicide The spider just offers some resources for you and some information about warning signs if you are concerned about a loved one, or if you want to know what warning signs to look for.

You can check out these resources here and we also have more information on our be smart for kids.org website about suicide prevention. And then finally the tea and be smart stands for tell and that's really where the power of the Beast Mart message comes in.

We've heard from people that because of these smart they know to ask about the presence of guns before their children go to other people's homes that they have talked to family members about guns in the home that they've recognized the role of guns and suicide and that gun owners are modeling responsible behavior as a juror.

Drizzle of be smart.

It's really important that people who own and work with guns are part of this conversation research shows that law enforcement the military hunting and outdoor groups are all really particularly effective when it comes to communicating Secure Storage practices.

So now you've heard the be smart message, you're one of about 75,000 Americans that has heard about be smart.

I just want to encourage you to tell that story to tell that message to other people and to continue these conversations that we're having about how to keep our kids safe and how to keep them away from unsecured guns.

So thank you again so much for joining us today for your time and attention.