



A look at the approximate number of children killed by gunfire since Newtown

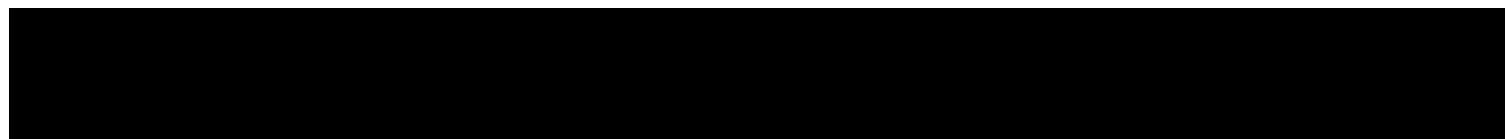


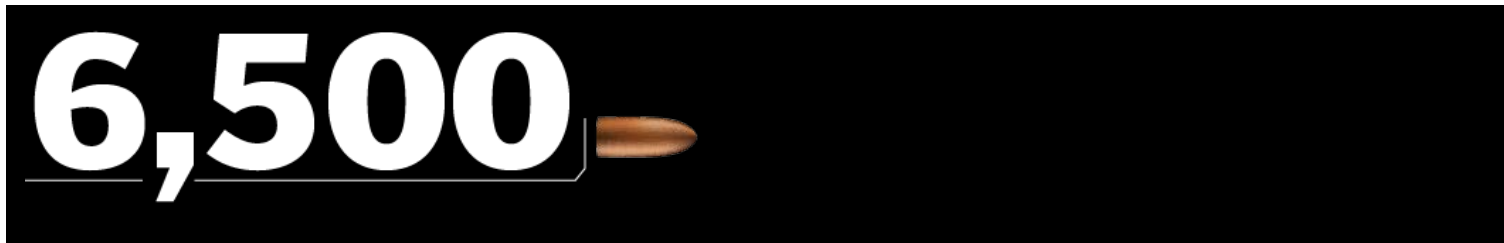
DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES)

Participants represented victims of gun violence attended a vigil to mark the 5th anniversary of the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School at Rutgers Presbyterian Church on Thursday in New York City.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

GLOBE STAFF DECEMBER 14, 2017





Approximate number of children killed by guns since the Newtown shooting

An exact count of the number of childhood deaths and injuries from firearms since the Dec. 14, 2012 shooting in Newtown isn't known, at least not yet. Instead, the figures above are approximations, based on averages of annual counts recorded in recent years by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The averages, also reported in research studies on the topic, show that about 1,300 children 17 or younger are killed by guns, and nearly 6,000 more are injured, nationwide each year.

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In the five years since 20 first-graders were shot to death at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., the number of children under the age of 17 killed or wounded by gunfire in the United States is astounding: Approximately 6,500 have been killed, and about 30,000 others have been wounded.

It's important to note that these numbers are approximate. There is no exact count of childhood deaths and injuries from firearms since the Dec. 14, 2012, Newtown shooting, at least not yet.

The numbers are crunched by averaging [annual numbers of deaths and injuries](#) recorded in recent years by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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But experts, including Dr. Michael L. Nance, director of the Pediatric Trauma Program at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, who has closely researched childhood gun injuries, said they believe the figures to be a fair representation, as stunning as they may seem.

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“The numbers are unbelievably high,” Nance said in an e-mail Thursday. “While events like Sandy Hook and Aurora or Columbine grab the headlines, quite obviously the problem goes on every day, insidiously . . . drip . . . drip . . . drip. It isn't the mass shootings that are the major issue, it is the daily repetition that leads to the numbers that are so unbelievable.”

The figures — also reported in research studies on the topic — show that nationwide, between 2012 and 2015, the latest year of available data, about 1,300 children each year were killed by guns, and nearly 6,000 more were injured.

“The numbers have been pretty consistent year after year,” said Dr. Eliot Nelson, a professor and pediatrician at the University of Vermont Children's Hospital whose research has focused on injury prevention, including injuries from firearms.

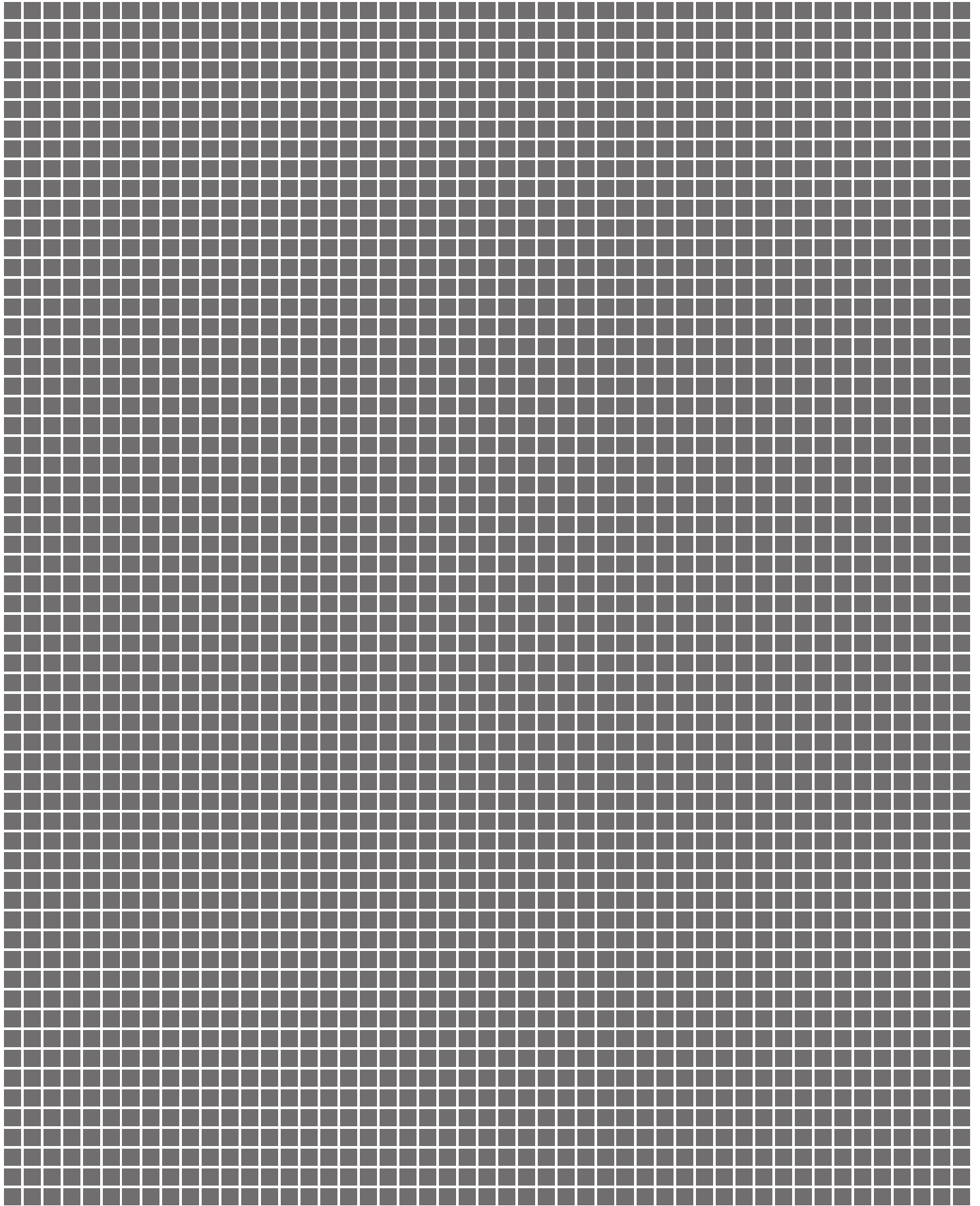


30,000

≈ Approximate number of children injured by guns since the Newtown shooting

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“As a cause of death in our country, firearm injuries are really second only to motor vehicle accident injuries for young people,” he added.

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A [study](#) by CDC researchers published in June in the journal Pediatrics also found that the vast majority of those shooting victims were older children. A total of 82 percent of children killed by guns in recent years were between 13 and 17 years old. The rest — about 230 children a year on average — were 12 or younger.

“Firearm homicides among older children were more likely to be precipitated by another crime, to be gang-related, and to have drug involvement, which is consistent with other research on youth violence,” the study said.

“As seen in this and other studies, younger children are often ‘caught in the crossfire,’ whether as innocent bystanders to community violence or during incidents of intimate partner violence and family conflict,” it added.

The study, which described itself as the most comprehensive analysis to-date of childhood deaths and injuries from guns in the United States, also found:

- 53 percent of the childhood gun deaths were homicides; 38 percent were suicides; and 6 percent were “unintentional,” including children shot accidentally.

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- Boys accounted for 82 percent of deaths.
- African-American children had the highest gun homicide rate, about 10 times higher than the rate for white children.
- White and American Indian children had the highest gun suicide rate, nearly four times higher than the rate for African-American and Hispanic children.

Nelson said the medical community has grown increasingly concerned with the role of gun violence on public health in the United States.

“We realize that things in the last 50 years or 100 years, things like infectious diseases that used to be far and away the biggest killers, aren’t killing kids anymore,” he said. “What are killing kids are injuries. And what kinds of injuries? Many are from firearms.”

Nance said the numbers don’t represent the countless parents, relatives, and friends left devastated when a child is shot to death.

“Five years on from the deaths of 20 elementary school kids (as well as 6 adults) and so very little has changed,” he added. “Sad.”

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