

LANCASTER COUNTY SAFE FIREARM STORAGE INITIATIVE

Creating a Family Plan for Firearm Safety

Gun violence (unintentional injury, suicide and homicide deaths) requires a comprehensive approach to prevention and treatment. **Safe storage** is an evidenced-based approach to prevention, supported by researchers, healthcare professionals, and gun owners alike. Responsible gun ownership is not just about who, where and when a person uses their firearm; it's about how guns are stored when not in use.

When not being used:

- Firearms should be stored **locked** and **unloaded**,
- Ammunition (ammo) should be stored **separately** from firearms (preferably locked up),
- The key or lock combinations should be **inaccessible** to children, adolescents, and those at elevated risk of harm to self or others.

Creating a Firearm Plan

When considering a firearm plan for you and your family, start by answering the following questions:

- Who will have access to the firearm?
- Who will be taught fundamental rules of gun safety?
- Do family members know the hazards weapons pose?
- How and where will the weapon and ammo be stored?
- Where will the key or combinations be stored?
- Will the plan be updated as children age or family circumstances change?
- Will all family members discuss and agree to the plan?



The Lancaster County Safe Firearm Storage initiative is in partnership with Mental Health America of Lancaster County and the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office.

For more information on the program, visit MHALancaster.org

Educating Children on Firearm Safety (Pre-K through 4th graders)

The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® program is a gun accident prevention program. This program helps parents, law enforcement, community groups and educators navigate a topic important to our children's safety.

- **STOP:** This first step is crucial. Stopping first allows your child the time they need to remember the rest of the safety instructions.
- **DON'T TOUCH:** A firearm that is not touched or disturbed is unlikely to be fired and endanger your child or others.
- **RUN AWAY:** This removes the temptation to touch the firearm as well as the danger that another person may cause it to fire.
- **TELL A GROWN-UP:** Children should seek a trustworthy adult, neighbor, relative or teacher – if a parent or guardian is not available.



For behavior change in a real-life situation, it is critical that you repeat and practice these 4 important steps with everyone in your home.

For additional gun safety resources, visit the following webpages:

- <https://eddieeagle.nra.org>
- <https://MHALancaster.org/suicide-prevention-coalition/gun-lock-project>
- <https://www.endfamilyfire.org>
- <https://violence.chop.edu/gun-violence>

Sources:

- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Center for Violence Prevention. **Gun Violence | Center for Violence Prevention**
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Gun Violence Solutions, **Safe and Secure Gun Storage | Center for Gun Violence Solutions**

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