

Gun Violence Prevention & Safety Association of Child Life Professionals Policy Statement

Gun violence is a public health crisis impacting the children, families, and communities Certified Child Life Specialists serve. Child life has a rich history of supporting the emotional safety of children and families, as every child deserves to feel safe in every aspect of their life. As advocates, condolences are not enough. The child life community is responsible for supporting the children and families they serve as they navigate these crises in their schools and communities.

From mass shootings to daily acts of gun violence, firearms are now the leading cause of premature death for children in the United States¹. A comprehensive public health approach is urgently needed to address this growing crisis.

ACLP supports an evidence-based public health approach to reduce gun violence, emphasizing prevention, education, and safety. To end this, ACLP:

- Recommends that Certified Child Life Specialists, as bound by their ethical obligations in the Child Life Code of Conduct, advocate for children and families.²
- Supports the evidenced-based gun violence prevention laws and safety recommendations outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Policy.³
- Encourages improved access to mental health care and services.

ACLP recognizes that we must act now to stop this growing crisis. Here are some ways you can take action:

- Download and use the ACLP Gun Violence Prevention advocacy toolkit resources.
- Tell your members of Congress to support legislation to reduce gun violence.
- Spread the word: share the ACLP Gun Violence Prevention social media templates across your social networks.
- Submit an abstract on this topic for an ACLP Webinar, Child Life Conference or write an article for ACLP Bulletin.

As a child life community, it is time that we enact real solutions so that the children, families, and communities we serve no longer have to endure these traumatic events.

ACLP Board of Directors
ACLP CEO

¹ Goldstick Centers for Disease Control. (2022, May 4). Fast facts: Firearm violence prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html>

² Child Life Certification Commission. (2020, January). Child Life Code of Ethics. <https://www.childlife.org/certification>

³ American Academy of Pediatrics. (2022, Dec 6). Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in Children and Youth: Injury Prevention and Harm Reduction. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-060070>