



CSPV FACT SHEET

FS-007

1999

The Youth Violence Problem

- Recent school shootings (e.g., Littleton, CO, Springfield, OR, Paducah, KY, Jonesboro, AR) are atypical of youth violence.
- During the 1990s most adolescent homicides were committed in inner cities and outside of school.
- On a typical day, 6 or 7 youth are slain in this country, mostly inner-city, minority youth.
- Males are overwhelmingly the perpetrators in homicides involving youth, accounting for more than 90% of incidents involving those 10-17 years of age.
- Handgun homicides committed by young males (15-18) between 1980 and 1995 increased by more than 150%. This increase was fueled entirely by the use of handguns.
- While the national and Colorado trends are similar, the recent youth homicide rates in Colorado are about half the magnitude of the national rates.
- Youth are three times more likely than adults to be victims of violence. One quarter of youth violent victimizations involve the use of a firearm.
- Nationally, 5% of students reported feeling too unsafe to attend school at least once in the thirty days preceding the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. In Colorado, 4% of students reported feeling too unsafe to go to school.
- Nationally, 20% of high school students reported carrying a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club) at least once in the thirty days preceding the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Approximately 8% reported carrying a gun, and 10% reported having carried a weapon on school property on one or more occasions in those 30 days.
- Despite the prevalence of gun carrying in schools, school shootings still remain relatively rare events. Since 1992, approximately 190 shooting deaths have occurred in American schools (both student and faculty/staff). While clearly a serious issue, it must be noted that these 190 school-related deaths represent only about 1% of all youth killed with guns at the present.

The information for this fact sheet was excerpted from the following Center Paper:

Arredondo, S., Aultman-Bettridge, T., Johnson, T.P., Williams, K.R., Ninneman, L., & Torp, K. (1999). *Preventing Youth Handgun Violence: A National Study With Trends and Patterns for the State of Colorado* (CSPV-014). Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado.

Additional References:

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, Crime Gun Analysis Branch. (1998, May). *CGAB Shots*. Falling Waters, WV: Author.
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Advisory Council on Adolescent Health. (1998, February). *Adolescent Health in Colorado, 1997*. Denver, CO: Author.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice. (1996). *Crime in the United States, 1995*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Maguire, K., & Pastore, A.L. (Eds). (1998). *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1997* (NCJ 171147). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- National School Safety Center. (1998, August). *Categorical Breakdown of Total School-Associated Violent Deaths* (In-House Report). Westlake Village, CA: Author.
- Sickmund, M., Snyder, H.N., & Poe-Yamagata, E. (1997, August). *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1997 Update on Violence* (NCJ 165703). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.