

Protecting Our Children

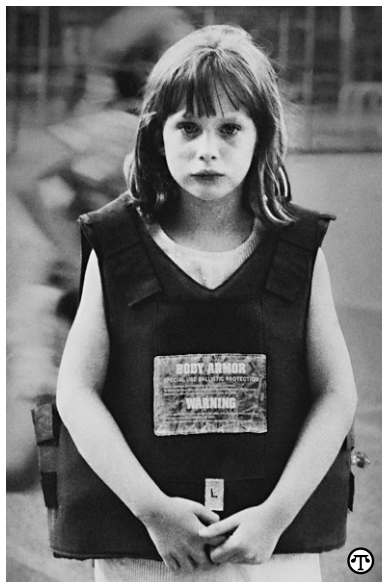
ASK For Answers To Violence

(NAPSA)—More than 3,500 children's lives may be saved every year. How, you might ASK? PAX, a non-profit, non-political organization dedicated to ending the gun violence epidemic, is launching the ASK Campaign (Asking Saves Kids).

The ASK Campaign, developed in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics, urges parents to ASK their neighbors if they have a gun in the home before sending their child over to play. More than 40 percent of homes with children have a gun and many of those are left unlocked and loaded, and every year thousands of children are killed or seriously injured with adults' guns. The ASK Campaign provides a practical opportunity for parents to protect their children from gun violence. Parents can show their support for the ASK Campaign by signing the ASK pledge at www.AskingSavesKids.com and join parents across America in protecting their children.

- First, PAX advises, realize that just talking to your child about the dangers of firearms is not enough. Children are naturally curious. If a gun is accessible in someone's home, there's a good chance a child will find it and play with it. "That's why it's a good idea to ask the parents of your children's friends if there's a gun in the house before sending your kids over to play," said Dan Gross, co-founder of PAX. "If the answer is yes, make sure the guns are stored unloaded and locked—ideally in a gun safe—with ammunition locked separately." Hiding guns is not enough. All too often, kids find guns parents thought were hidden.

- To make asking about guns easier, include the question with other things you normally discuss before sending your child to someone's house—seat belts, animals,



Posters like this are part of the ASK Campaign to protect children from gun violence.

allergies and so on.

- Use the facts. For instance, since more than 40 percent of homes with children have guns, you are ASKING the question to make sure your child is safe.

- Work through groups. You can introduce the ASK idea through a Little League group or community effort such as the PTA.

- You don't have to be confrontational. Present your concerns respectfully. Remember, you are simply trying to make sure your child is playing in a safe environment.

PAX hopes to shift public perception of gun violence from political debate to a matter of public health and safety. It proposes practical solutions all Americans, including gun owners, can support. For more information about PAX, or to sign the ASK pledge, go to www.AskingSavesKids.com.