

## Statement of Purpose

**T**he primary purpose of *The Future of Children* is to promote effective policies and programs for children. The journal is intended to provide policymakers, service providers, and the media with timely, objective information based on the best available research regarding major issues related to child well-being. It is designed to complement, not duplicate, the kind of technical analysis found in academic journals and the general coverage of children's issues by the popular press and special interest groups.

This issue of the journal focuses on youth gun violence in the United States, examining the impact of such violence upon children, families, and communities, and exploring policies that aim to reduce gun deaths and injuries to children and youth. More than 20,000 people under age 20 are killed or injured by firearms in the United States each year. Gun violence is the second leading cause of death to young people ages 10 to 19 in the United States, and it imposes significant economic and psychological costs upon society. Therefore, keeping children and youth safe from gun violence and restricting young people's unsupervised access to guns should be key priorities for legislators, law enforcement, public health practitioners, educators, and parents alike.

The articles presented here summarize the knowledge and research about how gun violence affects children and youth, and which policies hold promise for reduc-

ing youth gun violence. Because programs designed to teach children to avoid guns or behave responsibly around them have not been proven effective, we argue that strategies to restrict young people's unsupervised access to guns should be given greater emphasis. These strategies include changing behaviors regarding gun ownership and storage among parents; engaging law enforcement and community leaders in anti-gun violence efforts; altering the design of guns to make them harder for children to use; and tightening laws regarding gun sales to reduce youth access to guns.

We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this issue of *The Future of Children*. Our intention is to encourage informed debate about youth gun violence. To this end we invite correspondence to the Editor-in-Chief. We would also appreciate your comments about the approach we have taken in presenting the focus topic and welcome your suggestions for future topics.

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