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# **ASK.** Parent/Community Guide

**RESOURCES**

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## OVERVIEW



CPYV / The Center to Prevent Youth Violence, formerly known as PAX, is the largest non-political, nonprofit organization dedicated to ending the gun violence epidemic in America – an epidemic that kills 8 children and teens every day. Through innovative public health campaigns, CPYV promotes practical solutions that all Americans can embrace – solutions that help protect our families and children today.

CPYV, in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics, created the ASK (Asking Saves Kids) campaign. The ASK campaign is a national public health initiative that provides something real almost every parent can do to keep their children safe. Based on the astonishing fact that over 40% of homes with children have a gun, many of which are kept unlocked or loaded, ASK encourages parents to ask if there are guns in the homes where their children play. It is a simple idea that is probably saving lives every day.

# ASK.

To date, over 400 grassroots organizations have partnered with the ASK campaign to bring the message of ASK to their communities. Additionally, the American Academy of Pediatrics, through its official collaboration with CPYV, has promoted the ASK message to its 60,000 members nationwide. ASK is further supported by a groundbreaking public service advertising campaign including partnerships with several of the nation's most prominent companies in television, radio and print. Through this nationwide grassroots education program and powerful public service advertising campaign, the ASK campaign has successfully inspired an estimated nineteen million households to begin asking if there are guns where their children play.

The ASK campaign provides opportunities for community groups, healthcare organizations and individuals to help ensure the safety of our children. In this packet, we have provided suggestions for activities to share the ASK message as well as examples of materials. If you need additional information, materials, or wish to provide your feedback, please contact 212-269-5100 or [ask@cpyv.org](mailto:ask@cpyv.org).

**ASK is a partnership** between CPYV / The Center to Prevent Youth Violence and the American Academy of Pediatrics

**ASK is sponsored** by the American Medical Association

**ASK Endorsers Include:**

American Federation of Teachers  
American Public Health Association  
Children's Defense Fund  
Emergency Nurses Association  
The Interfaith Alliance Foundation

National Association of Children's  
Hospitals and Related Institutions  
National Association of Pediatric  
Nurse Practitioners  
National Education Association  
National Head Start Association

National Parenting Association  
Physicians For Social Responsibility  
Police Executive Research Forum  
Police Foundation  
Safe Kids Worldwide

## **REAL STORIES: SONYA BARGE**

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How often do parents think to ask if the house their child plays at has a gun somewhere inside? Sonya Barge, spokesmom for Asking Saves Kids (ASK), didn't think to, and as a result, she lost her three-year-old son Markie to a gun wound in a tragic accident. "So many people are just too relaxed with guns and their storage," says Barge. "If you're too casual with them, someone will die and it's usually a small child losing their life at the hands of another small child."

As a spokesmom, Barge has helped bring ASK to her hometown of St. Louis by talking about her own experience and promoting the ASK message to the local media, schools and other key outlets. "I share my story because I don't want anyone else to have to share it," she says. Eight years ago, the 11-year-old son of Markie's baby-sitter found an unloaded gun and ammunition in his house. He loaded it; Markie entered the room, startled him, was accidentally shot and died.

"So many people tell me they have no idea what to ask or that so many homes have poorly stored guns," says Barge. "Even I couldn't believe that 40% of houses have guns or that about 3,000 kids are killed every year because of them." Working hard to coordinate the next National ASK Day, Barge's main goal is to get the facts out to anyone willing to listen.

Sonya has been successful in getting the ASK message out to parents in St. Louis via the local TV and radio station, as well as the local paper. She was also featured in the national PTA magazine, *Our Children*, and was honored as a Lifetime TV Champion for Change.

"It's important for people to realize that this can happen to anyone, no matter how safe a house may seem," she says. "If you don't ask, that one split second can change your entire life."

***A video clip entitled 'Sonya's Story' is part of the ASK Powerpoint Presentation. You can also request it as a separate DVD. To hear the stories of other spokesparents, click on 'Real Stories' at [www.AskingSavesKids.org](http://www.AskingSavesKids.org)***

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES – PARENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

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**You can request any of the materials below or request assistance in planning an activity or event by contacting CPYV at 212-269-5100 or emailing [ask@paxusa.org](mailto:ask@paxusa.org).**

- Distribute Brochures: The ASK campaign has created educational brochures, “*19 Million parents Are Asking!...Are You?*” These tri-fold brochures are double-sided with text in both English and Spanish and provide parents with tips on how to start the conversation. These can be distributed through existing community meetings and venues.
- Include an article about ASK in your Newsletter: Newsletter articles and other bulletins and updates generated by different groups are an effective way to spread the ASK message, advertise an ASK related event in your area, or let your community know you support the ASK mission. ASK has sample newsletter pieces in varying lengths and with different themes as well as logos and other graphics that can be easily cut and pasted—just call or email us.
- Link to ASK: Place a link to ASK ([www.AskingSavesKids.org](http://www.AskingSavesKids.org)) or the Arm Yourself with Knowledge Facebook Page (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/ArmYourselfWithKnowledge>) on your website or in your email footers or anywhere else. ASK will provide all artwork.
- Use the Media: Talk to media PSA (Public Service Announcement) directors about the specific risks to children and the need to keep the community educated. Ask the radio, television and print media to donate broadcast time (or print space) to run PSAs or local stories on the topic. ASK has two professional-quality television PSAs: “Neighbors” and “Toy Guns.”
- Use your Connections: Organize a group from your community to write a ‘letter to the editor’ of the local paper or recruit friends and associates to help in planning an event. Consider forming an ASK Community Coalition to get the word out. Consider whether there might be a local foundation or business in your area that might want to bring ASK to your community in a more comprehensive, structured way. Contact [ask@cpyv.org](mailto:ask@cpyv.org) for more details.
- Talk to your Doctor: Your local healthcare providers interact with families every day, making them a natural partner for ASK. Talk to your healthcare provider or local hospital administration about displaying ASK materials or including them with preventative care literature or take-home packets for parents.
- Share your Story: The ASK campaign recognizes the impact real-life stories have on those who can affect change. Please consider sharing how a firearm-related event affected your home or community. The ASK campaign is honored to have spokes-parents share their stories in hopes that similar tragedies will be avoided. Email [ask@cpyv.org](mailto:ask@cpyv.org).
- Join Us for ASK Day: Celebrate ASK Day on June 20th! Encourage your organization to hold an ASK Day event or write an OP-ED letter to your local newspaper. Visit [AskingSavesKids.org](http://AskingSavesKids.org) for more ideas and details.

*Don't forget to keep us posted about your successes as well as your challenges and let us know about ASK activities, events, and media attention in your town so that we may highlight your efforts!*

# RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The following is a list of materials that are available for your use in getting the ASK message out. Please contact us at 212-269-5100 or via email at [ask@cpyv.org](mailto:ask@cpyv.org)

## ASK Posters

ask.

40% of homes with children have guns, many left unlocked or loaded, and more than 10 children are killed or injured with those guns every day. You may ask a lot of questions about your child's safety when you send your child to another home. Next time, ask if there's a gun where your child plays. For tips on asking go to [askingsaveskids.org](http://askingsaveskids.org)

Asking5min+Kids.org 1-800-983-1ASK

ask.

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Asking5min+Kids.org 1-800-983-1ASK

19 MILLION parents are asking!

Are you?

**NO**  
Start one this time you have to worry about.

**YES**  
Make sure all guns are stored unloaded and locked. Ideally in a gun safe, with ammunition stored separately.

Here are some ideas to start the conversation:

- "We all know how excited kids can be..."
- "I have one, don't mind me asking a few questions about the safe safety..."
- "I'm not bringing anything, I just want to make sure my child is safe..."
- "All of us in the PTA have committed to making sure our kids are safe..."
- "I heard the most surprising fact from my pediatrician..."
- "Remember what we found in our kitchen when we were kids..."

For more tips on asking go to [AskingConsults.org](http://AskingConsults.org)

askingsaveskids.org

## ASK Brochures

### Other materials:

- Television PSA's
- Newsletter samples
- 'Sonya's Story' DVD
- ASK Powerpoint Presentation
- ASK T-shirts and stickers

## **FACT SHEET**

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### ***Access to Guns***

- 8 children and teens are killed by firearms every day (Injury Mortality Reports, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, 2007).
- 38 additional children and teens are seriously injured by firearms every day (Injury Mortality Reports, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, 2009).
- Over 40% of American households with children have guns (Peter Hart Research Associates Poll, 1999, American Journal of Public Health, April 2000).
- More American homes have guns (40%) than dogs (36%) (Peter Hart Research Associates Poll, 1999, American Journal of Public Health, April 2000, APPMA 2000).
- 29 children and teens are seriously injured by BB or Pellet guns every day (Injury Mortality Reports, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, 2009).
- Almost 90 percent of accidental shootings involving children are linked to an easy-to-find, loaded handgun in the house (Society of Pediatric Nurses, 1998).
- Eighty-eight percent of the children who are injured or killed in unintentional shootings are shot in their own homes or in the homes of relatives or friends (Pediatrics 2005).
- Nearly 1.7 million children under the age of 18 live in homes where firearms are stored both unlocked and loaded in the United States (American Journal of Public Health, April 2000).
- Over 75% of kids in homes with guns say they know where the gun is hidden (Benenson Strategy Group Study commissioned by PAX, July 2002).

### **THE ASK SOLUTION**

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- 50% of parents reported being concerned about guns in other homes (up from 45% in 2005).\*
- 78% think it's important to ASK about guns in other homes. (up from 55% in 2004).\*
- 97% of parents who owned a gun said that they would not be offended if asked about the presence of a gun in their home by another parent.\*

\*Benenson Strategy Group Study commissioned by CPYV, January 2006

## **SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

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Dear Editor:

[Insert local story regarding gun violence, if appropriate, here] Every time we lose another child to gun violence, we hear outrage at the senselessness of the tragedy, but rarely do you hear about a tangible opportunity to do something to prevent more children from dying. I am writing about one such opportunity. It is called the ASK campaign. The ASK (Asking Saves Kids) campaign urges parents to ask their neighbors if they have a gun in the home before sending their children over to play. It is a comprehensive national public health campaign, developed by CPYV / Center to Prevent Youth Violence, in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics. Over 40% of homes with children have guns. Many are kept unlocked and loaded, and every year thousands of children are killed or seriously injured as a result. ASK provides a practical opportunity for parents to protect their children from gun violence. Parents across the country are committing to ASK the simple question that could save their child's life – "Is there a gun where my child plays?" For more information about the ASK campaign or ASK activities in your area, □ visit [www.AskingSavesKids.org](http://www.AskingSavesKids.org) or call 1-800-983-I ASK.

Sincerely,

Your name/organization

Please contact [ask@cpyv.org](mailto:ask@cpyv.org) for additional samples and artwork and remember to send us the printed version.

### **TIPS FOR STARTING THE CONVERSATION**

- "We All Know how curious kids can be..."
- "I hope you don't mind me asking a few questions about the kids' Safety..."
- I heard the most surprising fact from my pediatrician..."
- Do you remember that tragic story about the kids who found a gun?...."
- All of us on the PTA have committed to making sure ou8r kids are safe..."