

Americans: Hold Parents Responsible for Children's Gun Violence

An overwhelming majority of Americans say parents should be charged with a crime if their child uses their gun to shoot someone. This follows the fatal shooting of a six-year-old Michigan girl by one of her elementary school classmates.

In such cases, 75 percent say parents should be prosecuted for failing to keep the firearm out of their child's hands, this ABC News poll found. Just 15 percent said the parents should not be charged with a crime.

| | Charge parent for child's gun crime? | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| | Should | Should not |
| 3/7/00 | 75% | 15 |

Separate ABC polling last fall found broad support for a variety of gun safety measures. Seventy-nine percent, for instance, favored mandatory trigger locks on all stored guns.

The gun used to shoot Kayla Rolland had been in the possession of a 19-year old man in the shooter's home. The man has since been charged in connection with the shooting for failing to keep the firearm out of the hands of the six-year old gunman.

GROUPS - Americans across the board support the notion that parents should be held responsible if their child uses their gun to shoot someone. Political views have little effect; 82 percent of Republicans support the idea, as do 75 percent of Democrats - even though Republicans in general are less apt than Democrats to support most gun control measures.

The largest disparity, albeit not a very large one, is among men and women. Seventy percent of men support holding parents responsible, as do 80 percent of women.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone March 3-7, 2000, among a random national sample of 1,012 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Bobbi Jo Fuller

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:
<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

44. Say a child takes a gun owned by his parents and uses it to shoot someone. Do you think the parent should or should not be charged with a crime for failing to prevent the child from getting the gun?

| | | | |
|--------|--------|------------|------------|
| | Should | Should not | No opinion |
| 3/7/00 | 75% | 15 | 10 |