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Statement by SRCD President Nancy Hill on Texas Shooting

We are heartbroken and stunned. Although we haven't fully mourned or buried our brothers and sisters who were ruthlessly murdered in Buffalo, we are faced with another tragic shooting, this time of children—beautiful, innocent third and fourth graders—and their teachers.

Schools should be a safe place for children to learn and play, while making friendships and cultivating dreams. But in Uvalde, Texas, on Tuesday, and elsewhere recently, it has yet again become a place of a horrific mass shooting. This mass murder, along with the others that are increasingly frequent, leaves a trail of traumatized children, families, and communities in its wake. While Uvalde, Texas is the epicenter of the trauma, its ripple effects are felt across the nation, as children continue to wake up each morning and attend school. The seeming randomness of the violence serves to erode parents' trust that schools are safe places to send their children, even when they have trusting relationships with teachers, administrators, and staff. It serves to place fear in the hearts of teachers and staff as they set out to do the jobs they love—serving children.

As a field, developmental science has long studied and identified the effects of trauma on children—spanning short and long-term biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional consequences. Whereas identifying the effects of trauma and treatments that may mitigate its effects is important, preventing senseless tragedy is even more important. *Our children deserve so much better.*

To mobilize change, we urge our members to share research findings that support healing and other solutions to end gun violence widely with their communities, advocacy organizations, policymakers, and others who may not be aware of the deleterious effects of trauma on children.

Helpful Resources Informed by the Developmental Sciences:

- Talking to Children About Tragedies & Other News Events: How to talk about tragedy with children across a variety of ages and developmental needs. From healthychildren.org and based on an interview with Dr. David Schonfeld, a developmental-behavioral pediatrician and an expert in school crisis and bereavement.
- Helping Your Children Manage Distress in the Aftermath of Shooting: Tips on how to talk with children and manage their stress from clinical and school psychologists. From the American Psychological Association with expert advice from clinical and school psychologists, Drs. Ronald Palomares, Lynn Bufka, and Robin Gurwitch.
- Empowering Communities to Prevent Mass Shootings: Summary of how research can inform new strategies to reach people at risk of committing a violent act. From the American Psychological Association.
- Research on Gun violence. List of science resources summarizing the effects of gun violence on society. From the American Psychological Association.
- Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy. Report by a panel of experts summarizing the science on the complexities underlying gun violence and evidence-based recommendations for prediction, prevention, and policy. Written by an American Psychological Association task force composed of psychologists and other researchers.

Contact your senators contact your representatives

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