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## Gun Violence Prevention Groups Condemn Launch of AR-15 Assault Rifles Designed Specifically for Children

*Manufacturer Says Its JR-15 Child-Sized Assault Rifle “looks, feels, and operates just like Mom and Dad’s gun”*

Washington, DC — An Illinois-based gun manufacturer is marketing AR-15 assault rifles designed specifically for children. Manufactured by WEE1 Tactical, and dubbed the JR-15, the company states that the child-sized assault rifles are 20 percent smaller than a standard AR-15, weigh only 2.2 pounds, and retail for \$389. The company promises that the children’s assault rifle “looks, feels, and operates just like Mom and Dad’s gun.”

AR-15 assault rifles have been used in some of America’s most lethal mass shootings, including the 2012 attack at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, that left 20 children and six educators dead. The company launched the gun’s release earlier this month at the SHOT Show, the annual closed-to-the-public trade show sponsored by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), which is based in Newtown.

WEE1’s [website](#) and [related materials](#) (including hats, shirts, patches and stickers) are dominated by cartoons of a skull and crossbones of a boy and a girl (see below). The boy skull has a blonde mohawk haircut and a green pacifier and the girl skull has blonde pigtails with pink bows and a pink pacifier. Both have one eye a black void and the other a rifle sight. On its website, the company boasts, “The BRAND is meant to be EDGY. We believe its [sic] exciting and will build brand recognition and loyalty!” In an official SHOT Show [“Product Spotlight” video](#) profiling the gun, WEE1 Tactical’s Eric Schmid explains that the logo, “Keeps the wow factor with the kids.”



Josh Sugarmann, executive director of the Violence Policy Center and author of the organization’s 2016 report [“Start Them Young”—How the Firearms Industry and Gun Lobby Are Targeting Your Children](#), states, “At first glance this comes across as a grotesque joke. On second look, it’s just grotesque. That a gunmaker has embraced imagery of dead children to promote

gun ownership by youth surreally illustrates how detached this industry is from the death and injury that result from its products, especially among the young.”

Po Murray, chairwoman of the Newtown Action Alliance, states, “The callousness of the National Shooting Sports Foundation to promote a children’s version of the same type of assault rifle that was used in a horrific mass shooting of 20 first graders and six educators in our shared community is just the latest proof that the organization, and the gun manufacturers it represents, will do anything in pursuit of continued profits.”

Kathleen Sances, president and CEO of One Aim Illinois, states, “The marketing of children’s assault rifles by an Illinois company not only brings shame to our state, but can only increase the threat of gun death and injury to children here and across the nation.”

For a comprehensive background on the coordinated efforts by the NSSF, gun manufacturers, and the National Rifle Association to market guns to children, please see the 2016 Violence Policy Center study [\*“Start Them Young”—How the Firearms Industry and Gun Lobby Are Targeting Your Children.\*](#)

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The Violence Policy Center ([www.vpc.org](http://www.vpc.org)) is a national educational organization working to stop gun death and injury. Follow the Violence Policy Center on [Facebook](#) and follow [@VPCinfo](#) on Twitter.

The Newtown Action Alliance (<https://www.newtownactionalliance.org/>) is a Newtown-based, national grassroots organization formed after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings. Their mission is to achieve the steady and continuous reduction of gun violence through legislative and cultural change.

One Aim Illinois (<https://oneaimil.org/>) is a statewide not-for-profit organization dedicated to the reduction of death and injury caused by firearms in Illinois by advocating for common sense, evidence-based, gun violence prevention measures.