

September/October 2011

SAFETY TIP

Gun Safety: Before you send your child to someone's house...

Before you send your child to someone's house, ask if firearms are stored unloaded and locked. Recent estimates are that anywhere from 35 to 50% of American households has a gun inside.

Nearly two-thirds of parents with school age children who keep a gun in the home, believe their firearm is safe from their children. However, a recent study found that when a gun was in the home, 75-80% of first and second graders knew where the gun was kept.

Before age 8, few children can reliably tell the difference between a real gun and a toy gun. Children as young as three years old are strong enough to pull the trigger of a handgun.

Allowing kids to play with toy guns is a personal decision; however it's important that you explain to your child the difference between the consequences of a real gun and a toy gun.



Even if you don't own a gun in your home, chances are your child may come into contact with a gun at a neighbor or friend's house

The Missouri Child Fatality Review Program cited in their 2008 report that nationwide approximately 500 children (through age 17), die each year from unintentional shootings, and almost 5 times as many are wounded. Many unintentional childhood deaths involve guns in the home that have been left unsecured and loaded.

A good time to introduce the subject of guns is the first time your child shows interest, even in toy guns. BB guns and pellet guns are not regulated by the government, but can also cause serious injury. Gun safety rules should apply to BB guns as well.



There are resources available to help you educate your child.







One resource is **Project Child Safe**, a nationwide program whose purpose is to promote safe firearms handling and storage. This program has been distributing safety education messages and free gun safety kits since 2003.

The **Eddie Eagle program** through the National Rifle Association also provides free education and gun safety kits. Eddie Eagle's message to young kids is simple:

If you find a gun,

**STOP!
 Don't Touch.
 Leave the Area.
 Tell an Adult.**

Gun Safety Resources/Tips:

-  [Project ChildSafe](#)
-  [NRA/Eddie Eagle](#)
-  **MO Dept. of Conservation offers mandatory hunter education courses:**
[MDC Hunter Education](#)
-  **Call your local law enforcement to inquire about free gun locks or community "buy back" or "amnesty" programs.**
-  **Keep your guns stored unloaded and locked with ammunition stored separately.**
-  **Talk with your children about gun use on TV and video games vs. real life.**