TEACH YOUR KIDS

If you see a gun:

1. **STOP!**
2. **Don't touch the gun.**
3. **Leave the area where the gun is located.**
4. **Go tell an adult about the gun.**

Missouri Department of Social Services

Missouri Department of Social Services
Children's Division
dss.mo.gov/cd

Resources

- Missouri Child Fatality Review Program Annual Report: dss.mo.gov/re/cfrar.htm
- Eddie Eagle Gun Safe Program: eddieeagle.nra.org/parents
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/injury.htm
- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org

Keeping Kids Safe:

Firearm Safety

Missouri Department of Social Services

Gun Safety & Children

Adolescents with access to guns have **higher risk of suicide.** If you have a teen at risk for suicide, remove guns from your home.

About **1/3** of the homes with children in the U.S. have a gun. Many are stored **loaded & unlocked.**

Children as young as **2 years old** may be strong enough to pull the trigger on a handgun.

The AAP recommends firearms be **stored unloaded, locked up** (lock box, cable lock, or firearm safe), with the ammunition stored seperately.

What can parents do to keep their kids safe?

- **Store firearms unloaded when a child is in the home**. Most unintentional childhood shooting deaths involve guns kept in the home that are left loaded and accessible to children and most often occur when children are unsupervised and out of school.
- **Store ammo separately.** Ammunition should be locked in a separate location, out of the child's reach. Gun locks, load indicators, and other safety devices should be used on all firearms.
- **Guns are not toys.** Children can be exposed to gun violence on TV, in movies, and in video games. Parents should teach their child the difference between a toy gun and a real gun, and between pretending and real life. Even young children may know where the gun is kept or how to access it, even if the parent thinks it is hidden or out of sight.
- **Teach safety**. Gun safety lessons that explain the rules for gun safety should be done openly and allow the child to ask questions.
- **Be aware of suicidal behaviors**. If a caregiver suspects their child might be suicidal, it is extremely important to keep all firearms, alcohol, and medications under lock and key, and seek appropriate mental health services for the child. Keep the key on your person, to prevent your child from accessing the lockbox.
- **Enroll youth in a hunter safety course**. If a child is 11 years or older, and expresses an interest in hunting, enroll them in a Hunter Education Safety Course. These programs teach how to handle firearms safely at home and while hunting.

Remember, even if your child has had firearm safety instruction or is familiar with firearms from hunting, the firearm should not be readily accessible to them. Many children who found and handled a gun, or pulled the trigger, reported having some previous type of firearm safety instruction. For more information, visit the Missouri Department of Conservation online at: **mdc.mo.gov**.

Visit **dss.mo.gov/cd** for more information on how to keep kids safe.