

An Important Message to Parents About Gun Safety

If your child sees a gun, he or she should:

STOP!

DON'T TOUCH.

LEAVE THE AREA.

TELL AN ADULT.

We encourage you to reinforce these ideas by repeating this message and discussing it with your child.

If your home is like half of those in our nation, your home has a gun. We encourage you as a responsible parent and citizen today to...

- Make sure all guns that you may have cannot be reached by anyone who should not use them, especially children.
- Keep your ammunition securely stored where a child or any other unauthorized person cannot reach it.

Talk to your child about guns. Discuss their uses and history. Answer your child's questions honestly and openly. If you can't answer a question, contact a knowledgeable person for the answer. By removing the mystery surrounding guns, your child will be far less curious about guns and more likely to follow safety rules.

Make sure your child understands the difference between a toy gun and a real gun, and the difference between pretend and real life. Cap guns, "laser" guns, and plastic squirt guns are toys; BB guns and firearms, such as pistols, rifles, and shotguns, are not toys. Explain to your young children that guns on television are not real, and are shown being used incorrectly.

If you allow your child to play with toy guns, use them to teach safe gun handling.