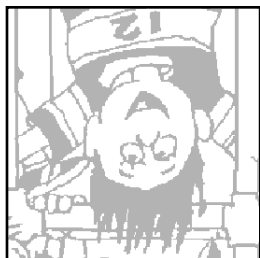


- Teach your children the difference between a real gun and a toy gun. Make sure they understand that real guns can seriously hurt or kill someone.
- Never point a firearm at anything you are not prepared to destroy. This includes real guns and toy guns that shoot projectiles.
- With today's realistic versions of video games, it can be difficult for children to tell the difference between fantasy violence and real violence. You should determine if "shooting" video games are appropriate for your child. You then must make sure they understand that a gun used in real life has very different consequences than one on a video screen.



Safe Kids GRAND FORKS

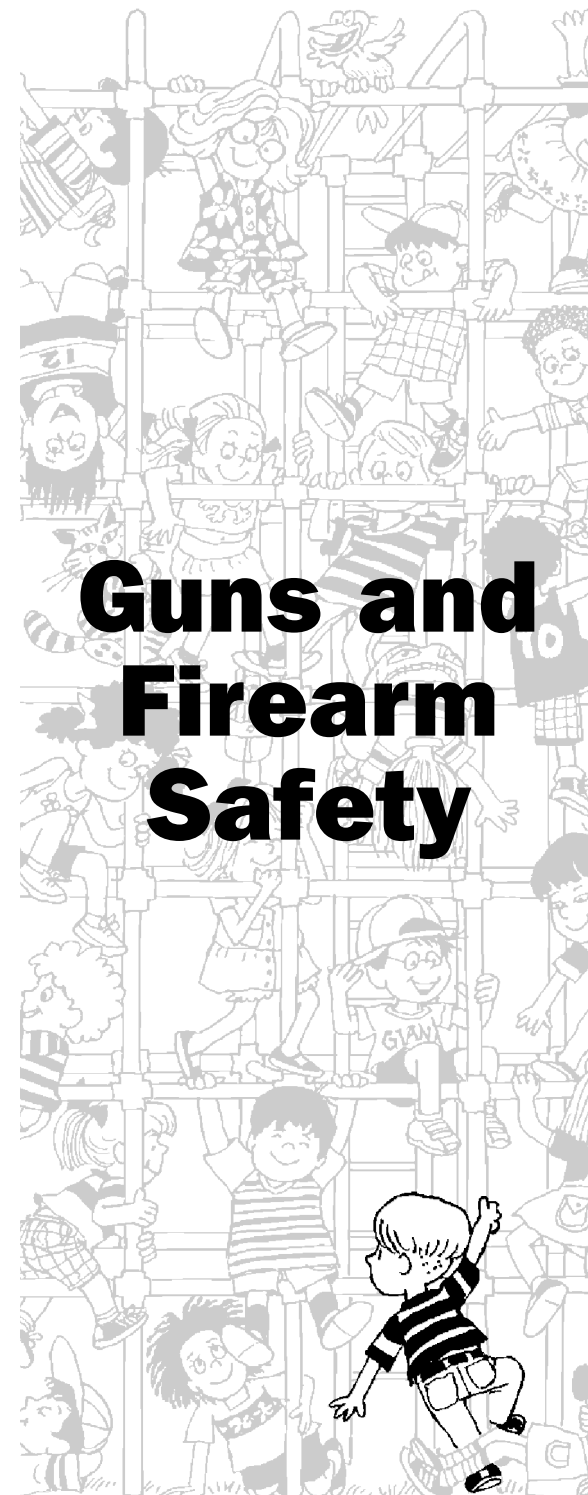
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Guns and Firearm Safety

Accidental Firearm Injury

Approximately 150 children age 14 and younger die each year from accidental gunshot wounds and hundreds more are injured or permanently disabled.

Exposure to guns and access to a loaded firearm increase the risk of accidental firearm-related death and injury to children. Unrealistic perceptions of children's abilities and behavioral tendencies with regard to guns are common. These include misunderstanding a child's ability to gain access to and fire a gun, distinguish between real and toy guns, make good judgments about handling a gun, and consistently follow rules about gun safety.

The Facts Are In

- In 2001, nearly 8,000 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for non-powder gun-related injuries (e.g., BB guns, pellet guns).
- The accidental firearm injury death rate among children ages 14 and under in the United States is nine times higher than in 25 other industrialized countries combined.
- In 2001, more than 1,400 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for unintentional fire arm related injuries. In 2000, 86 children died from those injuries.
- Nearly two-thirds of parents with school-age children who keep a gun in the home believe that the firearm is safe from their children. However, one study found that when a gun was in the home, 75 to 80 percent of first and second graders knew where the gun was kept.



Did You Know?

- Most childhood accidental shooting deaths involve guns that have been kept loaded and accessible to children and occur when children play with loaded guns.
- Accidental shootings among children most often occur when children are unsupervised and out of school. These shootings tend to occur in the late afternoon, peaking between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m., during the weekend, during the summer months (June to August) and the holiday season (November to December).
- Rates of accidental firearm related injuries are higher in rural areas, where people are more likely to own firearms.
- Boys are more likely to be injured and die from firearm related incidents than girls.
- Kids as young as 3 have enough strength to fire many of the handguns on today's market, especially the small, lighter weight models marketed to women.
- BB guns, especially high-velocity models, kill several people each year.
- Toy guns that fire projectiles (such as plastic) are responsible for several hundred injuries each year, particularly ones to the eyes and face.

Steps To Safety

- In homes with children, it's best not to have guns accessible. They should be locked and out of sight of children if they are in a home.
- Keep the ammunition in a separate and locked place.
- Make sure kids don't have access to the keys or lock combination.
- A parent should seriously weigh the risks of keeping a gun in the home.
- Tell children to never touch a gun.
- Instruct kids to tell a trusted adult if they find a gun and not to touch it themselves.
- Use a trigger lock on a gun. It prevents improper use and discourages theft.
- BB guns are not for children younger than 16 years of age.
- Avoid toys that shoot projectiles. They have been known to injure eyes.
- Parents should check with neighbors, friends or relatives - or adults in any other homes where children may visit - to ensure they follow safe storage practices if firearms are in their homes.

