

# GUN SAFETY

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO FIREARM SAFETY  
FOR CHILDREN



[www.TexasCHL.us](http://www.TexasCHL.us)

FIREARM SAFETY IS A COMMUNITY  
RESPONSIBILITY WE MUST ALL  
SHARE, PARTICULARLY WITH  
REGARD TO OUR CHILDREN.



## A PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY

In a home where guns are kept, the degree of safety for a child rests squarely on the child's parents. Parents who accept the responsibility to learn, practice and teach gun safety rules will ensure their child's safety to a much greater extent than those who do not. Parental responsibility does not end, however, then the child leaves the home.

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## BASIC SAFETY TIPS:

- Keep all firearms out of reach of children.
- Firearms should be stored unloaded and kept under lock and key.
- Be sure to store the guns and ammunition in separate places.
- Do not hide firearms under pillows or in bedside tables.
- Talk to your children about the dangers of firearms and advise them not to play with guns.
- Ask other parents in the neighborhood to help by also educating their children.
- When cleaning or handling a firearm, never leave it unattended.
- Never throw ammunition away in a trash container.
- Treat all firearms as if they are loaded.
- Further child-proof your gun with a trigger guard or some other safety device.

CHILDREN HAVE A NATURAL  
CURIOSITY ABOUT GUNS. DON'T  
FOOL YOURSELF; MOST  
CHILDREN, IF NOT PROPERLY  
TAUGHT, WILL PLAY WITH A GUN.

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**STOP!**

1

**Don't  
Touch!**

2

**Leave  
the Area!**

3

**Tell an  
Adult!**

4

If you have decided that your child is not ready to be trained in a gun's handling and use, explain that he or she *must not touch a gun* in your home, unless you are present and have given permission. If your child sees a gun outside the home, teach him or her the four steps above.

## A PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

### Why Teach Your Child Gun Safety

There is no particular age to talk with your child about gun safety. Each parent is in the best position to determine when discussions should begin. Until safety is discussed, however, numerous issues related to firearms will remain a mystery to your child.

A good time to introduce the subject is the first time he or she shows an interest in firearms, even toy pistols or rifles. Talking openly and honestly about gun safety with your child is usually more effective than just ordering him/her to "stay out of the closet," and leaving it at that. Such statements may just stimulate a child's natural curiosity to investigate further.

As with any safety lesson, explaining the rules and answering a child's questions helps remove the mystery surrounding guns. Any rules set for your own child should also apply to friends who visit the home. This will help keep your child from being pressured into showing a gun to a friend.



According to federal statistics, there are guns in approximately half of all U.S. households. Even if no one in your family owns a gun, chances are that someone you know does. Your child could come in contact with a gun at a neighbor's house, when playing with friends, or under other circumstances outside of your home. It is critical for your child to know what to do if he or she encounters a firearm anywhere, and it's the parents' responsibility to provide that training.

### Toy Guns vs. Real Guns

It is advisable, particularly with very young children, to discuss gun use on television as opposed to gun use in real life. Firearms are often handled carelessly in movies and on TV. Additionally, children see TV and movie characters shot and "killed" with well-documented frequency. When a young child sees that same actor appear in another movie or TV show, confusion between entertainment and real life may result. It may be a mistake to assume that your child knows the difference between being "killed" on TV and in reality.

If your child has toy guns, you may want to use them to demonstrate safe gun handling and to explain how they differ from genuine firearms. Even though an unsupervised child should not have access to a gun, there should be no chance that he/she could mistake a real gun for a toy.