

AIM USA
"KIDS & GUNS - A DEADLY MIX"

A DEADLY MIX... Federal officials estimate there are guns in one half of the households in the United States. Because of this alarming statistic, your child could easily come into contact with a gun at a neighbor's house, when playing with friends, or even at home. A gun is a tool, not a toy and should be handled only by an adult. When a child puts up a finger or stick and says "bang, bang", he knows it's pretend. The problem develops when children get used to picking up a toy gun and saying "bang, bang".. and don't know the difference when they pick up a real gun. An adult understands what happens when a real bullet comes...a child can't.

EDUCATE THE PARENTS John Horn, former Instructor for AIM USA and former Police officer, believes the key is to educate parents on how to handle guns at home ... not necessarily to stop children from pointing fingers as pretend guns. "The problem is not with shoot'em up play as long as a gun isn't around. We've done that for years.

GUNS ARE IN ONE OF EVERY TWO HOUSES What is so critical now is that guns are left thoughtlessly and carelessly within grasp or sight of children by parents and adults...and even more amazing...**LOADED!** Shooting games, however, do concern many educators because youngsters cannot always distinguish fantasy from reality, and do not understand the consequences of their actions. To often a child throws a friend to the ground and expects him to jump up, unhurt, just like wrestlers on television. For children, there is nothing more empowering and dramatic in their fantasy world than to point something at someone, say "Pow", and have them fall dead. Because more than 50% of our households have in their possession some type of firearm, we must educate all children to avoid tragic consequences. our unprepared, uneducated children (who are bombarded with fantasy violence on TV, in movies, and cartoons) must be made aware that **GUNS DO KILL!**

KIDS...If you see a gun, here are the three things to do: **STOP...DO NOT TOUCH THE GUN!** It may not be real, but it might be, and it might be loaded. **DO NOT TOUCH THE GUN! LEAVE THE AREA!** Get away from the gun as fast as possible. If it's real, you don't want to be around if someone else picks it up or starts to play with it! **TELL AN ADULT NOW!** As fast as you can, tell your parents, or some other adult you know, that you saw a gun, and where it was. Your parents will know what to do. **KIDS...**Remember these rules...repeat them five times & memorize them...they could save your life one day, so they're worth repeating.

DON'T TOUCH A GUN Even if your buddy says it isn't real, or isn't loaded. If your friend finds a gun...YOU get away as fast as possible. He may not know the rules. The gun could be loaded. The gun could go off before you can check it. Run as fast as you can to tell an adult what you found, where, & if anyone is still there with the gun.

TELL YOUR PARENTS Another thing....if you see a gun at a friend's house...tell your parents. Let them teach your friend & his family about gun safety. YOU...don't touch...no matter how much your friend says it's OK...come home immediately, & tell your parents.

Youngsters many times cannot distinguish fantasy from reality, & don't often understand the consequences of their actions. Guns are dangerous, deadly weapons. Teach them that they can never win a fight with a bullet.

PARENTS...You have two jobs...educate your children about the dangers of guns...& learn how to keep your own guns stored safely out of the way of your children. Teach your children that guns can & DO KILL! Teach your children the three things to do when they see a gun: **STOP...DO NOT TOUCH THE GUN! LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY! TELL AN ADULT NOW!** Explain the reasons for each rule, & review these rules often. Inquire about guns at your children's friends' houses...& don't be shy about asking the parents of these friends if there are guns in the house & how they're stored & handled...It's your child who could become an innocent victim of someone else's carelessness. Check with your local Police, Sheriff, or Gun Club about gun safety classes for kids & parents.

KEEP YOUR KIDS ALIVE! Treat every firearm with respect...always as if it was loaded. Unload weapons when they are not in use. Children cannot be shot accidentally unless guns are loaded. Keep all weapons locked securely in cabinets. Keep bullets locked away separately from the guns themselves. Never point a gun at anything; never "horseplay" with weapons. Equip your guns with trigger locks which are distributed free or at a very small cost by many law enforcement agencies. Educate your children...educate yourself...keep your kids alive!!

