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The Voice of Agriculture

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**PREVENT TRAGEDIES**  
***Teach Children Gun Safety!***



With a firearm present in about half of all American households, all young children should learn that firearms are not toys. Federal officials estimate there are over 200 million firearms in the United States. Studies suggest they're kept in approximately half of all households.

Whether or not a particular family owns firearms, chances are, neighbors and relatives do, making it likely that children will encounter a firearm at some point. Don't depend on the childproofing of guns. Gun-proof your children by teaching them about gun safety. We teach children when they are very young to look both ways before crossing the street and not to talk to strangers. We must also teach them what to do if they find a gun.

Teach your children that if they ever find a gun they should:



**STOP!**  
**DON'T TOUCH!**  
**LEAVE THE AREA!**  
**TELL AN ADULT!**

However, children are naturally curious and their curiosity can override all of your warnings. Following are suggestions to promote gun safety:

- Teach your children the difference between a “toy” gun and a “real” gun.
- Don't try to hide your gun. Children find or stumble across almost anything you try to hide.
- Gun lockers can provide a false sense of security—all it takes is forgetting to lock it once. If you use a gun locker, invest in one with button combinations that automatically locks
- Never point a gun at another person—even if you think the gun is not loaded. Tragic accidents have occurred while “just joking around” with a gun.
- Guns are not playthings. You should always handle them with the utmost respect. Your children will learn not only from safety rules you teach them but also by your actions.
- When cleaning or handling a gun in your home, never leave it unattended.
- Always store the ammunition in a separate location from your gun. Young children can figure out how to load a gun.
- Invest in a trigger lock or similar device to help prevent and accidental discharge.