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# Mentoring the Young Hunter

## HUNTER EDUCATION

## YOUTH FIREARMS SAFETY

## Is hunting a safe activity for young people?

Hunting can be an extremely safe activity for young and old alike, but safety is not a matter of luck. To be safe while hunting one must know how to hunt safely, and practice safe hunting techniques.

Safe hunting practices are learned behaviors. These practices, as well as safe hunting principles, need to be constantly promoted with new and inexperienced hunters.

It is the responsibility of a young hunter's parent or mentor to ensure that the practices taught in youth firearms safety and hunter education classes are continually reinforced in young hunters.

The purpose of this brochure is to assist you in that process and to give you some ideas for keeping both yourself and your novice hunter safe and accident-free.

PHOTO: Timothy M. Smalley - MN DNR

## How's your hunter education and firearms safety knowledge?

In order to instill safety-consciousness in a young hunter, you need to be sure that you are modelling safe hunting practices.

If you have never taken a firearms safety or hunter education course, enroll in one right away, or better yet, take the course with your young hunter.

Even if you have taken a course at some time, make it a point to sit down with your young hunter and review the materials that they received in their youth firearms safety training. The review is good for them and will give you a better perspective on what today's young hunters are being taught.



A key role for a parent or a mentor of a young hunter is to insure that the young hunter has a firearm that functions properly, fits the shooter, and is a model that can be safely operated by an inexperienced shooter.

Some individuals maintain a romantic notion that a young hunter should be outfitted with any available hand-me-down rifle or shotgun and sent afield to "learn the ropes."

This is an irresponsible and potentially tragic idea.

## Firearm incidents involving young hunters always seem to have one or both of these things in common:

- Through neglect or lack of knowledge, the young hunter failed to follow one of the basic rules of firearm safety.
- The young hunter was using a firearm that:
  - was not properly working
  - did not fit them correctly
  - was not appropriate for their experience level



Forging our future by mentoring a young hunter today

Select appropriate firearms and foster a sense of responsibility

PHOTO: Tim Loesch - MN DNR