



# Kids 'n Guns Position Statement

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## **Why does 4-H have a shooting sports program?**

- 4-H uses shooting sports to teach youth development. Our programs are valuable for helping young people develop self-confidence, personal discipline, responsibility, teamwork, self-esteem and sportsmanship. The discipline and self-control required for responsible firearms use carries over to many other aspects of life.
- 4-H programs provide a positive experience for youth and promote the safe and ethical use of firearms.
- It is our belief that firearms education reduces gun accidents.
- Hunting and shooting are rich American traditions. 4-H shooting sports programs help continue this tradition through involvement of the total family: youth, teens, parents, grandparents, etc.

## **Don't shooting programs like those run by 4-H help spread America's violent gun culture?**

- No! In fact, there is ample evidence that the opposite is true. The 4-H shooting sports program is designed to teach good self-concept and character, and to promote the highest standards of safety and ethical behavior. In addition, with 60-80 million gun owners in America, and the vast majority of them using guns safely and responsibly, America has a *peaceful* gun culture.
- In a society that has chosen to possess firearms, all members, regardless of age should be provided adequate training to ensure safe, ethical and responsible interaction with firearms.

## **Isn't easy access to firearms one reason for the violent behavior we have seen in Columbine and other school shootings?**

- No, access is not the issue. The safest location for a responsible gun owner to store a firearm is the secure environment of his or her home.
- Firearms should however, be stored so that they are inaccessible to unauthorized users.

## **Isn't hunting inhumane and unnecessary in modern life?**

There are four primary values that arise from hunting: societal, economic, ecological and historical.

1. **Societal:** Hunting is a viable and healthy food source, promoting good sportsmanship and ethics. It is a valued part of our American heritage and is exceptionally good mental/physical exercise. Hunting is an ideal and common family activity.

2. Economic: Hunting minimizes the economic loss of human life and property damage that may result from road kills and crop depredation. Hunters spend millions of dollars each year to pursue the sport, and much of that money goes directly into wildlife management.
3. Ecological: Hunting is a vital wildlife management tool. Hunters' dollars support wildlife habitat projects in every state in the USA. Hunting improves the health of natural wildlife populations and contributes to the conservation of our natural resources. A well-placed shot by a skilled marksman is a more humane cause of death than natural causes experienced by wildlife.
4. Historical: Hunting was a necessary method of obtaining food and clothing by our forefathers. The act of hunting and utilizing game animals, in similar ways, helps us to appreciate the demands and sacrifices that our ancestors faced in the historical development of modern civilization.