

# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO RECREATIONAL SHOOTING FOR YOUNGSTERS™



**FOR THE MILLIONS OF PARENTS** who enjoy participating in recreational shooting sports, it is welcome news when their children express an interest in participating in them, too. These parents know and appreciate the benefits gained from being involved in sports that are safe, challenging and rewarding activities they can share with their children for years to come.

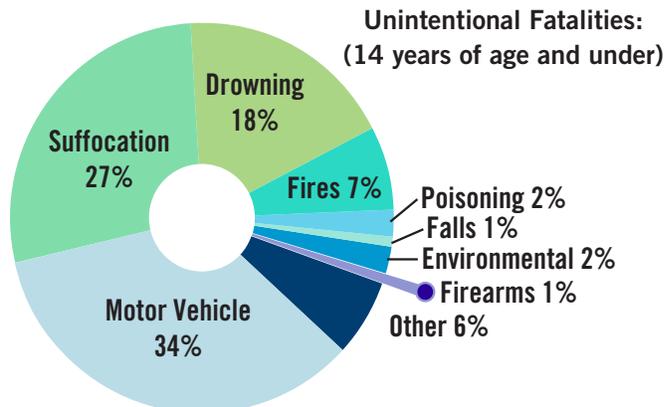
For parents with limited or no exposure to recreational shooting sports, the decision to allow their children to get involved may be a difficult one to make. This brochure is intended to help parents better understand what the shooting sports are all about, and the benefits their children can derive from participating in them.



## SAFETY AND THE SHOOTING SPORTS

Probably a parent's first concern about the shooting sports is safety. If you are a parent who knows little about firearms, your perception is, understandably, that firearms can be dangerous if not handled properly. However, latest statistics from the National Safety Council indicate that firearms-related accidents are at an all-time low and that shooting sports are rated among the safest of all sports. Strict emphasis on safety education is key to these impressive facts. For anyone, no matter how young or how old, who wants to learn how to shoot, **understanding the rules of firearms safety is the first and most important requirement.** To know and follow these rules goes hand-in-hand with practicing and developing the discipline of good shooting skills. Trends indicate an increase in firearm ownership in America. Whether firearms are being purchased for personal or home protection or for shooting sports participation, chances are your child may come in contact with one. A youth

shooting program, even if your child decides not to continue in the shooting sports, will give your child an important safety-awareness education and a healthy respect for firearms.



SAFEST ACTIVITIES		PERCENTAGE OF INJURY PER 100 PARTICIPANTS
1	Camping (vacation/overnight)	0.01%
2	Billiards / Pool	0.02%
3	Hunting with Firearms	0.04%
4	Bowling	0.06%
5	Running / Jogging	0.07%
6	Archery (target)	0.08%
7	Tennis	0.14%
8	Mountain Biking (off road)	0.15%
9	Water Skiing	0.15%
10	Golf	0.16%



## THE SHOOTING SPORTS PROVIDE LIFE-SKILL BENEFITS

Learning how to shoot requires discipline, self-control, hand-eye coordination and concentration. Required safety training instills respect, responsibility, teamwork and sportsmanship. The quick success beginner shooters often experience gives them a sense of self-esteem and confidence. In young people, these are all important qualities that affect many other aspects of life. A good youth shooting program fosters these positive life skills.

It is important to be aware of local and state laws and regulations regarding the possession and use of firearms, including age limitations or restrictions. For a summary of current information visit [nraia.org](http://nraia.org) or contact your state Department of Natural Resources.

## SHOOTING SPORTS

The challenge of the shooting sports is the test for accuracy, and often speed, when firing specific types of firearms at different, specially designed targets, some moving and some static, over varying distances. There are three primary types, or disciplines, of firearms used in the shooting sports: rifle, pistol and shotgun. Each discipline requires practice to develop skills in concentration, self-control, hand-eye coordination and precision. For more in-depth definitions and general education about the shooting sports, visit [nssf.org/shooting](http://nssf.org/shooting).

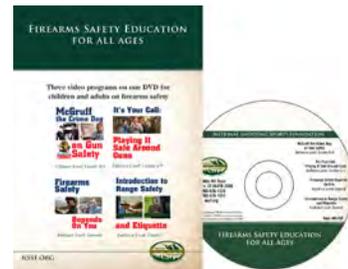
## NSSF SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) directs a variety of outreach programs that emphasize firearm safety awareness. You can learn more about these programs online at [nssf.org/safety](http://nssf.org/safety).

NSSF's Safety videos for schools help educate children to make fast, safety-conscious decisions if they should encounter a firearm at school, at home or a friend's home. [nssf.org/safety/video](http://nssf.org/safety/video)

Project ChildSafe is a nationwide firearms safety education awareness program that emphasizes safe and responsible handling and storage of firearms through the distribution of safety literature and free gun locking devices to firearms owners. The program's new campaign is **Own it? Respect it. Secure It.** [projectchildsafe.org](http://projectchildsafe.org)

Safety and conservation literature cover topics such as firearms safety rules and responsibility, hunter ethics and conservation issues and is widely distributed through firearms safety and hunter education programs, youth shooting programs and at shooting sports or conservation events. [nssf.org/safety/lit](http://nssf.org/safety/lit)



## GENERAL TIPS FOR SAFE SHOOTING & FIREARM HANDLING

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
- Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
- Keep your fingers off the trigger. Don't rely on your firearm's "safety" device.
- Always wear eye and ear protection.
- Know your target and what is beyond it.
- Keep the firearm unloaded when not in use.

## YOUTH SHOOTING PROGRAMS

Many local gun clubs and public shooting ranges offer youth shooting programs for beginners. There are also many national youth and community organizations that offer specialized programs to introduce the shooting sports to young people. These programs, taught by certified safety instructors, emphasize safe gun handling and the development of shooting skills and help to develop positive life skills. Here are some programs for consideration:



**4-H SHOOTING SPORTS** programs provide a positive experience for youth, promote safe and ethical use of firearms and help foster involvement of the total family – youth, teens, parents and grandparents—with the goal of strengthening families through the participation in lifelong recreational activities. The program focuses on the cultivation and development of youth as individuals and responsible citizens. [4-hshootingsports.org](http://4-hshootingsports.org)



**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA** has a long-standing policy of teaching its youth the safe, responsible and intelligent handling, care and use of firearms, air guns and BB guns in planned, carefully managed, adult-supervised programs. Scouts can earn merit badges in shotgun and rifle. [scouting.org](http://scouting.org)



**THE SCHOLASTIC CLAY TARGET PROGRAM (SCTP)**, developed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and administered by the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation, provides school-age youth in grades 12 and under the opportunity to showcase their competitive shooting skills and earn state and national recognition and scholarships. The adult-supervised program focuses on instilling safe firearms handling, commitment, responsibility, leadership and teamwork. [ssfonline.org](http://ssfonline.org)



**USA SHOOTING** is the national governing body for the Olympic shooting sports and sponsors programs structured to provide guidance to beginners and to lead them to higher levels of expertise, perhaps as Junior Olympic shooters. [usashooting.org](http://usashooting.org)

Some additional organizations to contact that offer programs for beginning shooters are:

American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program	<a href="http://legion.org">legion.org</a>
Amateur Trapshooting Association	<a href="http://shootata.com">shootata.com</a>
Civilian Marksmanship Program	<a href="http://odcmp.com">odcmp.com</a>
National Rifle Association Education and Training Division	<a href="http://nra.org">nra.org</a>
National Sporting Clays Association/ National Skeet Shooting Association	<a href="http://nssa-nasca.org">nssa-nasca.org</a>
U.S. Jaycees Shooting Education Program	<a href="http://jci.cc">jci.cc</a>
YMCA Summer Camp Shooting Sports Program	<a href="http://ymca.net">ymca.net</a>

## THE SHOOTING SPORTS INVESTMENT

Shooting sports retailers provide a variety of firearms designed for young shooters. Matching your child to the right firearm will help ensure success. A good shooting sports retailer is very helpful in guiding decisions on what model firearm best fits your child, what is the right type of ammunition to use and what gear, especially mandatory and essential eye and ear protection, works best for getting started in the shooting sports.

When compared to skiing, biking or skateboarding, shooting is relatively inexpensive but just as personally challenging — and exciting — and it is one sport that is not limited to the physically trained athlete. The shooting sports' return on investment is the enjoyment of a lifelong activity that brings with it a sense of accomplishment and success, whether that success is based on self-competition with the target or the challenge of competing against scores of others for awards, scholarships or Olympic gold.



## TWO YOUNG PEOPLE SHARE PRAISE FOR THEIR SHOOTING SPORTS EXPERIENCE

### *Fast, Steady, On Target: From the Scholastic Ranks to Olympic Gold Medalist*

**VINCENT HANCOCK** shot his first clay target at age 5. By the time he was 16, he became the number one-ranking champion in International skeet. He's a young man who certainly stands out when he steps up to the firing line of a skeet field. In 2008, he won the gold medal at the Beijing Olympics, and by earning a gold medal at the 2012 London Olympics, Vincent became the first skeet shooter to repeat as Olympic champion.

At age 11, Vincent was already shooting competitively – and winning matches – in American skeet. He was also an active participant in the National Shooting Sports Foundation's Scholastic Clay Target Program and credits SCTP for giving him more competitive target experience. When Vincent first tried International skeet, he fell in love with the game.

"Compared to American skeet, targets in International skeet travel 20 miles per hour faster at 60 miles per hour," Vincent said. "After you yell, 'Pull,' the targets can be released anywhere from immediately to three seconds later, keeping you on your toes. You have to hold your gun down, with the butt below a line on your vest and then mount after you call for the target. And three of the stations send

out two targets; in American skeet you can have your gun mounted, and you don't have any doubles."

Vincent's rise to the world's number one ranking in International skeet has been fast, steady and on target. In 2006, Hancock shot in seven world matches and earned an unprecedented seven medals, gaining him recognition as the co-shooter of the year. After he fired his last shot at the International Skeet World Championship in Korea, he stood head and shoulders above the best adult shooters on the globe. Not only did he become the youngest champion ever and the number one shooter in that discipline in the world, but he set three world records in doing so.

"When I shot my last target, it was unbelievable," Vincent said. "We had a couple hundred people watching from right behind us, and it was on American TV!"

In a short time, Vincent has gained enough wisdom to offer this advice about competitive shooting:

"Go out and try it with an open mind," he said. "You'll fall in love with it. The thing is, you can't give up. Just keep going at it full blast. Always go for the gold!"



## TWO YOUNG PEOPLE SHARE PRAISE FOR THEIR SHOOTING SPORTS EXPERIENCE

**KIM RHODE** began her competitive shooting career at age 10 and won her first Olympic gold medal in 1996 at age 17. She went on to win Olympic bronze in 2000 and gold at the 2004 Olympic Games. When the Olympics eliminated double trap shooting, Kim switched to skeet and won a silver medal in 2008 and gold in 2012. She is the most successful female Olympic shooter ever. She enjoys public

speaking, giving shooting demonstrations, skiing and hunting, and is an avid builder and restorer of cars. She has studied veterinary medicine and in 2013 had her first child, a son. The following essay is a personal account of what the shooting sports has meant to Kim and her family.



At the young age of 10, at the start of her career, and wearing her Olympic medals.



### *Dreams Really Do Come True*

By Kim Rhode

Shooting has been passed down in my family for generations. My first memories of shooting are trips to the range with my parents and grandparents. I began shooting competitively at age 10 in the three-position rifle event using my dad's competition .22 that he used when he was a kid. Then a friend suggested that I try skeet, and with the challenge of moving targets I was hooked. First it was club shoots, then state shoots, then the World Shoot until I was on my way to live my dream of going to the Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia.

Training for the Atlanta Olympic Games was scheduled around my high school classes. I lettered four years varsity for shooting at my high school. It was a tough schedule. Would I do it again? In a heartbeat!

This hard work has taught me discipline, focus and that to live your dream you have to work to make it come true. Many times during my shooting career I have been behind in a match. I've learned to never give up, and I have come from behind to win! My conviction was tested at the Olympics in Atlanta. The final round was intense. By the end of the first five pair I had lost my lead. But I told myself that I wasn't going to give it up so easily. Of the last 20 targets I missed only one. After everyone had completed their targets I was tied with Germany and Australia, but I was the last shooter and had my last two targets yet to shoot. I broke both targets and won the gold by two birds!

Now I enjoy coaching new shooters and introducing them to the great outdoors, just like my parents and grandparents did for me. The shooting sports are a perfect tool for kids to learn values like responsibility, integrity, perseverance and sportsmanship. Learning to be a gracious winner is easy, but learning to be a gracious loser is much tougher.

Shooting has taught me that it's about having a dream, giving your all and doing the best you can at whatever you do. But mostly, it's about having fun, whether you're a recreational novice or competitive shooter.



## ▶ PLEDGE TO BE RESPONSIBLE

Have your child pledge to be safe and responsible about firearms

As a parent, you can take one immediate and important step with your child to ensure that your child's experience with firearms will be a safe, enjoyable and rewarding one.

Have your child sign this Safety & Responsibility Pledge.



A program of the  
National Shooting  
Sports Foundation®



# Project ChildSafe® Child's Pledge

## I Hereby Promise:

- I will not handle guns without permission from a grown-up that I know.
- I will never play with guns.
- I will not go snooping or allow my friends to go snooping for guns in the house.
- If I find a gun, even if it looks like a toy, I will not touch it; I will tell a grown-up I know right away.
- I will obey the rules of safe gun handling.

My signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

For more information on child safety and responsible ownership visit [projectchildsafe.org](http://projectchildsafe.org).

## ▶ A MESSAGE TO KIDS ABOUT FIREARMS RESPONSIBILITY

Not long ago, in another town, some kids found a firearm. Maybe they were looking for it because of something they saw on television. Maybe one of them dared the other to find it. Maybe they just found a firearm that was left out by mistake. It doesn't matter why they found it. What matters is the firearm was loaded, and they played with it. Now they are very sorry they did. Don't let this happen to you.



The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) is the trade association for the firearms, hunting and recreational shooting sports industry. Find out more about how NSSF supports programs designed to ensure the future of hunting and the hunter and conservation at [nssf.org](http://nssf.org).



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