

# Keeping You Safe

Homegunsafety.com

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## A Message to Parents about their Kids and Guns

I'm writing this message to you not only as a Firearms Instructor, but also as a parent because of what I found during my role as an instructor.

It had the opportunity to instruct two (2) 16 years olds with the Home Firearm Safety Course the other weekend in Sharon, Massachusetts. The reason they took the course is because they were going to apply for their Firearms ID Card with their parent's permission. During the course, one of the young men mentioned that he had in his coat pocket an air pistol that shot plastic bb's that looked just like a semi automatic pistol I used in the course teaching them how to unload the firearm safely.

At my request, he retrieved it and gave it to me to look at. I was shocked. The replica was that of a Walther P99 with a moving slide and sights. It looked like the real thing with the exception of the red barrel that toy manufacturers now use to delineate the difference between real and toy guns. I couldn't believe it. It was as realistic a looking and feeling gun as I've ever seen.

### Could your child be shot and killed by a Police Officer?



Airsoft Walther P99 – A Toy

The reason toy manufacturers use red tips on toy gun barrels was because too many children were killed or injured when they refused to put down a toy gun if confronted by a Police Officer. Unfortunately, Police Officers couldn't distinguish between real or toy guns with split second accuracy. If they are in jeopardy, they need to neutralize the threat regardless of age.

This discovery of a realistic operating toy gun without having the same

terminal results of firing a real bullet vs. a plastic BB opened my eyes to a whole new series of potential problems with kids today, which is why I'm writing this. I'm hoping that you as parents will realize this and do something to keep your kids or someone else's safe.



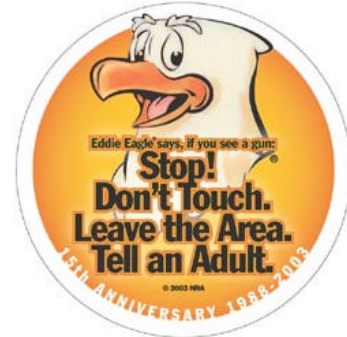
Walther P99 – The Real Thing

We teach safe rules for handling firearms to prevent accidents. However, if someone can take a realistic gun that fires plastic pellets and fire it at someone else in fun, that action totally contradicts what we teach and know about in real life. The problem is this: if someone is used to playing with the toy guns in an improper manner that don't terminally injure someone, will they be able to remove themselves from that memory or habit if they find a real gun that looks like their toy gun? Remember, the toy gun looks and feels like the real gun, but it doesn't shoot bullets.

What if a child finds a real gun on a playground, a street, an alley, or stored improperly in someone else's home? I've taught my kids to respect the firearm and follow the Eddie Eagle Rules of Safety: Stop, Don't Touch, Leave the Area, and Tell and Adult. I know my kids are safe in my controlled environment, but I don't know about others.

If you allow your kids to play with these realistic looking plastic pellet guns, I strongly recommend you have them take any type of Gun Safety Course to begin teaching them to handle firearms correctly. If not, how will you be able to prevent an accidental mishap? If it occurs, will you regret it? Many people think that this will never happen to my kids, but things happen. We all know it. As my Mom always told me, "It's better to be safe

than sorry." Please take the time with your kids. Please invest in their safety and invest in their future. Prevent an accident from occurring. You won't be sorry.



To find out more about the NRA Eddie Eagle Program, or to have your kids find out what they can do to stay safe, you can have them review some of the content on my For Kids Web Page. If you would like to expose your kids to firearms, please consider enrolling in my **Parents and Children's Introduction to Firearms Courses**.

### Isn't it better to be safe than sorry?



About the author: Mike Burchman is a Massachusetts State Certified Firearms Instructor, Utah State Certified Concealed Firearms Instructor, and a NRA Certified Instructor and Range Safety Officer. If you're a Massachusetts Resident and would like more information on firearms safety courses or instructions on how to use a firearm, please contact Mike Burchman at 508-361-4554 or visit [www.homegunsafety.com](http://www.homegunsafety.com).