

## Indiana 4-H Shooting Sports Education Position Statement

4-H programming encourages youth to:

- experience new activities;
- share the results of their learning;
- process the experience by analyzing and reflecting on it;
- generalize the experience by connecting it to real-world situations;
- and apply what was learned to different situations.

Youth involved in 4-H programming develop practical skills that help them to develop into capable, competent, responsible adults. A large support network of Extension educators, campus specialists, parents, and more than 20,000 volunteers makes Indiana 4-H one of the largest youth programs in the state.

4-H programs offer a wide range of curriculum choices so youth are able to explore new areas. In all programs caring adults provide both technical expertise and social contact because a part of positive youth development is based on positive relationships. Because participation in 4-H programming is voluntary, it is important to offer a wide variety of experiences so many avenues can be explored.

Why does Indiana 4-H have a shooting sports program?

- The shooting sports education program teaches self-confidence, personal discipline, responsibility, teamwork, and sportsmanship.
- The shooting sports education program appeals to youth that may not be interested in other 4-H offerings, especially males (85% of shooting sports education participants are males).
- The 4-H shooting sports education programs teach safe and ethical use of firearms.

Isn't it dangerous to teach kids about guns?

- Our society allows its citizens to possess firearms. Therefore, citizens should be provided adequate training to ensure safe, ethical, and responsible use of firearms.
- Having and using firearms does not lead to violence. Violence is a symptom of larger societal issues. The Commission for the Prevention of Youth Violence listed the following risk factors in its report: alcohol and other drugs, child maltreatment (physical and emotional), gang involvement, gun availability, media violence, violence among intimates and peers. *Youth and Violence, Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health: Connecting the Dots to Prevent Violence*: (American Medical Association, December 2000).

The Indiana 4-H Shooting Sports Education Program reaches over 5,300 youth each year. Programs are provided by trained and certified shooting sports education instructors. The certification workshop teaches volunteers about youth development as well as safe and ethical use of firearms.