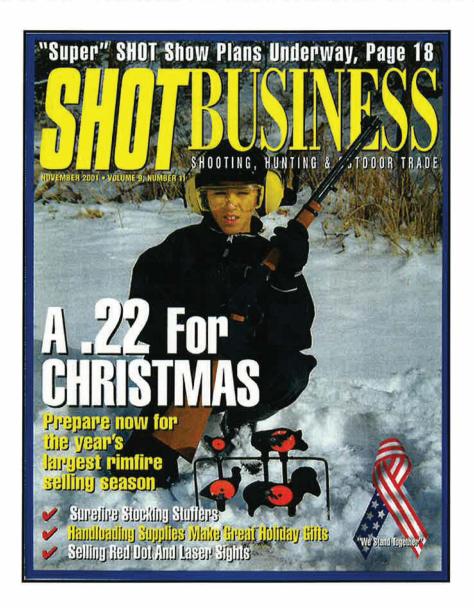


"A .22 FOR CHRISTMAS"

HOW THE GUN INDUSTRY DESIGNS AND MARKETS FIREARMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH





The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational organization that conducts research and public education on firearms violence and provides information and analysis to policymakers, journalists, grassroots advocates, and the general public. The Center examines the role of firearms in America, analyzes trends and patterns in firearms violence, and works to develop policies to reduce gun-related death and injury.

This study was authored by VPC Policy Analyst Marty Langley and edited by VPC Publications Coordinator Aimée Stenzel.

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- One Shot, One Kill: Civilian Sales of Military Sniper Rifles (May 1999)
- Making a Killing: The Business of Guns in America (January 1999)
- Joe Camel with Feathers: How the NRA with Gun and Tobacco Industry Dollars Uses Its Eddie Eagle Program to Market Guns to Kids (November 1997)
- Cease Fire: A Comprehensive Strategy to Reduce Firearms Violence (Revised, October 1997)

Violence Policy Center 1140 19th Street, NW Suite 600 Washington, DC 20036

202-822-8200 phone 202-822-8205 fax www.vpc.org web

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Introduction

The gun industry has struggled with stagnant or shrinking sales for several years due to the saturation of its primary market of white males. According to the *General Social Survey* conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, the percentage of gun-owning homes dropped nearly 20 percent from 1977 to 1996.¹

While the gun industry's primary market has already been tapped, a variety of demographic and cultural changes have made it difficult for the industry to find new customers. Hunting has traditionally been the means by which fathers have brought their children into the gun culture, but by 1996 Paul Januzzo, vice president of handgun manufacturer Glock, told the *Financial Times*, "grandpa or dad isn't taking the kid out into the field to teach him how to shoot anymore."²

Another challenge for the industry has been the decline of universal military service. The Police Foundation study *Guns in America* explains, "Almost everyone who currently owns a gun had some experience with guns as a youth, either in military service or (more commonly) from growing up with guns in the home."³

Finally, a wide range of alternative recreational activities are available to young people today, from video games to organized youth sports leagues. An advertisement for New England Firearms summed up the challenge facing the industry: "In effect, [the] greatest threat we face is the lack of a future customer base for the products which we all sell."⁴

To meet this challenge the gun industry—working hand-in-hand with the National Rifle Association (NRA)—has targeted children as vital to the future of the gun culture in America, both as future customers and as political foot soldiers for the gun-control battles that lie ahead.^{a5} As explained in the August 2001 issue of *Handguns* magazine, "The other topic that springs to mind among shooters and Second

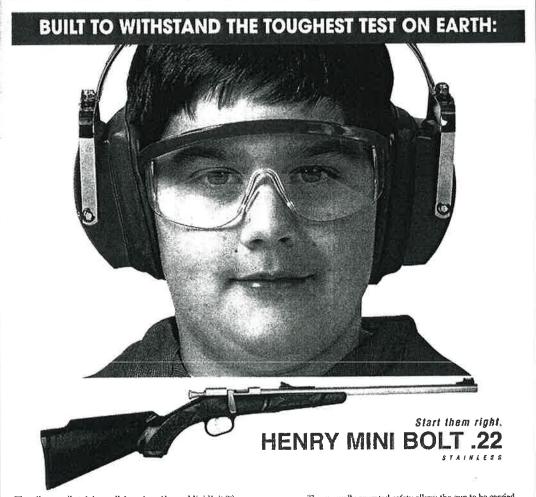
The gun industry has launched a campaign to attract children to the gun culture on several fronts—

Advertising in magazines aimed at youth, such as Boy's Life and the NRA's own youth magazine InSights.

[•] Funding the National Rifle Association's Eddie Eagle program—a marketing tool designed to put a friendly face on gun ownership disguised as a safety program.

Using video games to put virtual guns in the hands of potential customers.

Using public school wildlife management lessons to develop schoolchildren's interest in hunting and firearms.



The all new, all stainless, all American Henry Mini-Bolt 22 is built to withstand the toughest environmental conditions, including a young, enthusiastic kid who's eager to learn how to shoot

We've teamed up stainless steel with a tough fiberglass stock. The result is a rifle that's virtually kid-proof.

A beavertail forearm offers a comfortable and firm grip. It's one-piece bolt delivers the extremely smooth action all Henry rifles are famous for. For enhanced accuracy, this single shot. 22 has a stainless steel barrel with eight groove rifling.

The Henry Mini-Bolt .22 has Williams Fire Sights, with illuminated two green dot



adjustable rear sight and contrasting red front sight.

They can be adjusted for windage and elevation. It's rare to find sights of this quality on a youth rifle.

The manually operated safety allows the gun to be carried safely when cocked and to load and unload with peace of mind. Overall length is 30 1/4", barrel length is 16 1/4" and length of pull is 11 1/2". It weighs just 3 1/4 pounds, perfect for a youngster's smaller stature.

And we didn't forget the great looks that young people appreciate. The stainless steel elements contrast dramatically with the black stock and illuminated sights. Classic styling includes wrap around checkering, pistol grip and European style bott handle.

Give a youngster the gift of learning to shoot and handle a firearm in a safe and responsible fashion.

The Mini-Bolt's suggested retail price of only \$169.95 makes it more than affordable to Join your child in the great outdoors for a safe and enjoyable time. We at Henry Repeating Arms hope this rifle helps fathers keep a great American tradition alive.

"Contact us for a free Henry catalogue and for a list of our distributors" $\,$



HENRY REPEATING ARMS COMPANY 110 8th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11215 .

Phone: (718) 499-5600 .Fax: (718) 768-8056 . www.henryrepeating.com

CHACKE NO ICC ON READER SERVICE CARD

Advertisement, Henry Repeating Arms Company, Shooting Sports Retailer, September-October 2001, p. 13.

Amendment activists in regards to children and guns is that they are our salvation in the fight for liberty and the preservation of the shooting sports."⁶

The latest assault in the gun industry's battle for the "hearts and minds" of America's youth is the design of an increasing number of smaller, lighter versions of their firearms which are marketed as youth models.

"Sized for the Next Generation"

In May 2000, Brian C. Sheetz, Associate Editor of the NRA's *American Rifleman* magazine declared, "Nowadays, no parent has to settle for anything less than a youth-specific first firearm. A fine-quality lineup of youth long guns specifically designed and marketed for smaller shooters is available from main-line and specialty firearms manufacturers."

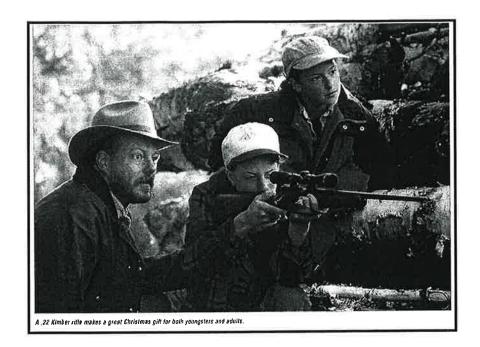
Sheetz offered a definition for the youth gun:

Exactly what is a youth-specific long gun? While no hard-and-fast definition exists, the key thing to look for is a firearm that will make shooting safe and enjoyable for the beginner. Some youth guns are simply abbreviated versions of their adult counterparts while others are proportionally scaled-down designs that would be as inappropriate for an adult shooter as an adult gun is for a slightly built youngster.⁸

Firearms designed specifically for children and youth tend to be rifles or shotguns. There are several reasons for the lack of youth-specific handguns—

- The larger size of typical long guns make them more difficult for children to carry. Handguns are easier for children's smaller hands to grip, as Andy Kemp noted with regard to his eight-year-old daughter, "Courtney's small hand is able to comfortably handle the Walther TPH while her older sister, Samantha, is able to handle the larger Colt with the .22 Conversion unit." As a result, children can simply use smaller, "adult" handguns.
- Federal law prohibits handgun possession by juveniles with several exceptions.
 On the other hand, while long guns cannot be purchased by those under 18

At the NRA's 1996 Annual Meeting, then-President Marion Hammer outlined the NRA's agenda to "invest" in America's youth saying, "It will be an old-fashioned wrestling match for the hearts and minds of our children, and we'd better engage our adversaries with no holds barred....If we do not successfully reach out to the next generation, then the freedom and liberty that we've lived for—and that many of our ancestors have died for—will not live beyond us."



Chipmunk .22 from the Rogue River Rifle Company is sized to fit young shooters.



"A .22 For Christmas," SHOT Business, November 2001, pp. 20-22.

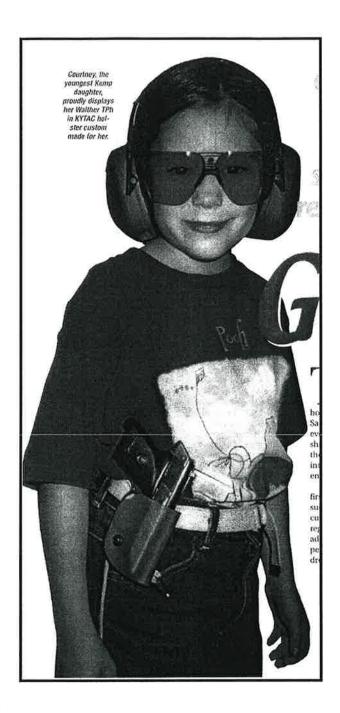
years of age from a licensed dealer, there are no federal restrictions on juvenile long gun possession.

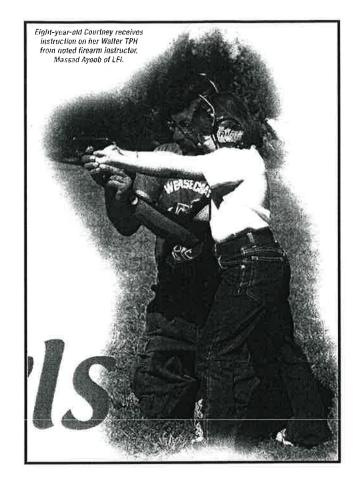
• Even some pro-gun writers see the dangers of arming children with handguns. As Clair Rees explained in *Handguns* magazine, "Handguns and very young shooters are a poor combination. When they're excited, it's too easy for youthful handgunners to point that short barrel in the wrong direction." 10

Despite the lack of models designed exclusively for young shooters, the firearms industry and gun lobby aggressively market handguns to children—

- The NRA youth magazine for junior members InSights routinely carries ads for firearms, including the Harrington & Richardson 929 Sidekick revolver.
- The United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA), actively recruits children to join its ranks. The organization's Junior Program features a web site "Dedicated to America's Finest Youth." Wally Arida, one-time publisher of the magazine *GunGames*, dedicated to combat shooting, stresses, "We must involve our children into [sic] our gun games. As an industry, we must build the structure for various youth shooting programs."
- The Single Action Shooting Society recruits kids for its "Cowboy Action shooting" events. Cowboy Action shooters dress up like "wild west" cowboys and shoot at targets over a course designed to approximate the look and feel of the old west. As explained in the NRA youth magazine *InSights*, "The horses are made of wood and the bandits are silhouette targets, but the spirit of this fast growing shooting discipline is as true to the Old West as you can get." Cowboy Action shooting requires the use of both handguns and long guns, and the minimum age is 12 years old.
- The NRA offers a marksmanship qualification program for handgun and long gun shooting. According to the NRA's web site, "The NRA Marksmanship Qualification Shooting is perfect [for] people of all ages—children and adults." Courses offered include handgun, shotgun, light rifle, and high-power rifle qualification.¹⁴

[&]quot;Practical shooting" is a euphemism for combat shooting, an event where competitors conduct their activities over a "run-and-gun" obstacle course where they face a variety of "real-world" shoot/don't shoot situations, such as firing at the human silhouette of a "hostage-taker" while sparing the "hostage." For more information on "practical shooting," see Josh Sugarmann and Philip Alpers, Gold Medal Gunslingers: Combat Shooting Targets the Olympic Games (Washington, DC: Violence Policy Center, 1999)







"Girls and Guns," Handguns, August 2001, pp. 50-54.

"How Old is Old Enough?"

The gun industry compares a child obtaining his or her first firearm to other rites of passage. According to William Kendy, contributing editor of the gun industry publication *SHOT Business*, "Getting your first .22 rifle is like your first real kiss. You never forget it." While many people would not consider a teenager shooting a .22 rifle under close adult supervision shocking, the gun industry is pursuing much younger children. In response to the question, "How old is old enough?" the 1994 National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) pamphlet *When Your Youngster Wants a Gun...* suggests:

Age is not the major yardstick. Some youngsters are ready to start at 10, others at 14. The only real measures are those of maturity and individual responsibility. Does your youngster follow directions well? Is he conscientious and reliable? Would you leave him alone in the house for two or three hours? Would you send him to the grocery store with a list and a \$20 bill? If the answers to these questions or similar ones are 'yes,' then the answer can also be 'yes' when your child asks for his first gun.¹⁶

Articles in the gun press indicate that even this vague criteria may be too strict:

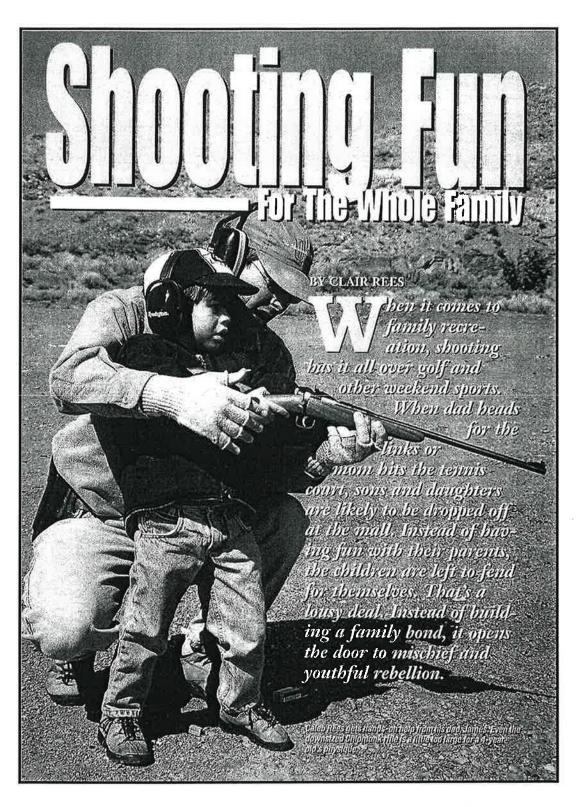
"Assessing whether your kids are responsible enough to handle live fire is the most difficult task. Responsibility is not a function of age. While they can be completely irresponsible with matters of schoolwork or cleaning their rooms, children are capable of prioritizing just as adults do, and can rise to the required level of responsibility if the subject is serious enough to warrant it."

Andy Kemp, "Girls and Guns," Handguns, August 2001, 57.

"My first recommendation is to start them young. I don't know for sure how old I was when my dad started to take me along on his squirrel hunts. But, since I can't remember a time when I didn't accompany him, I'd guess I was four or five years old."

Michael Beliveau, "Start 'Em Young!—There is No Time Like the Present," *Gun World*, July 1998, 33-35.

- "Tyler Kneuer looks and acts like most normal, healthy pre-kindergarten kids: almost....Make no mistake, these two aren't just father and son; They're hunting buddies and pals."
 - J. Mitchell, "Hunting Lore: The Next Generation," Gun World, December 1997, 33.



"Shooting Fun For The Whole Family," supplement to Handguns, July 1999

 "There are two great loves in my life, two passions, two joys, two reasons for living. The oldest is ten, the other is eight, and they are both girls, my girls, my two daughters, Samantha and Courtney....They have just recently taken an interest in guns and the resulting experience has, so far, been elating."

Andy Kemp, "Girls and Guns," Handguns, August 2001, 50.

 "We placed some water-filled balloons a dozen yards away, then fed Winchester shot cartridges to the .22. This allowed Caleb some satisfying hits even though the little rifle was still oversized for his 4-year-old physique."

Clair Rees, "Shooting Fun for the Whole Family," supplement to Handguns, July 1999, L.

"Pop Picks up the Tab"

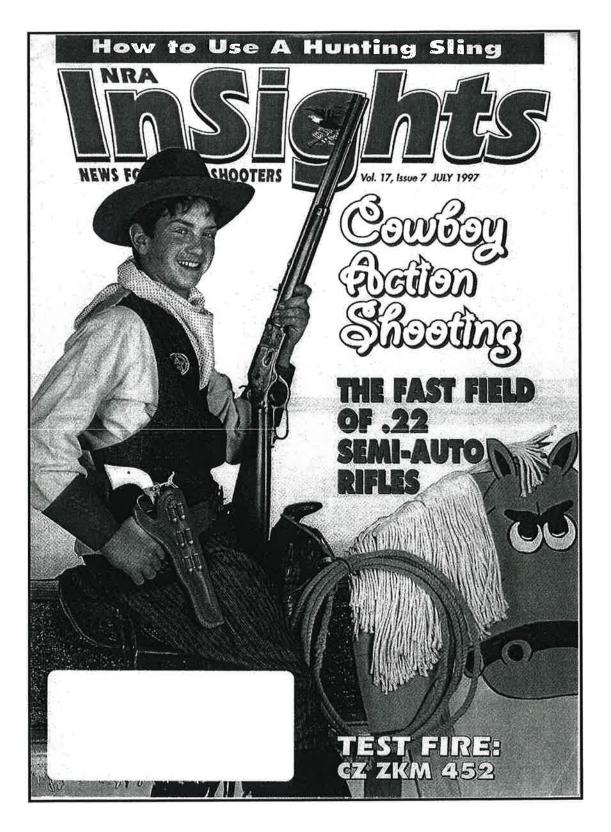
Despite the fact that children can't purchase guns from federally licensed firearm dealers, in many cases they *can* legally possess them. A 1998 poll conducted by *The New York Times* and CBS News found that 15 percent of American youths owned their own guns.¹⁷ Renowned gun writer Grits Gresham summed up the situation in a 1993 column in *SHOT Business*—

Kids can't buy guns, you say? Well, yes and no. It's true that most students from kindergarten through high school can't purchase firearms on their own. But it's also true that in many parts of the country, youngsters (from preteens on up) are shooting and hunting. Pop picks up the tab.¹⁸

"It's a Neat Little Starter Gun"

Gun manufacturers have openly acknowledged their cultivation of the youth market—

- "It's a perfect gun to start out a child in shooting."
 Eddy Fernandez, marketing manager, Taurus International Firearms
- "When it comes to the youth market, the Mark1GY is a big item for us."
 Brian Herrick, vice president for marketing and sales, Savage Arms



Cover, *InSights*, July 1997

 "Marlin's model 15 YN, the 'Little Buckaroo,' is a single-shot bolt rifle specifically made for kids."

Tony Aeschliman, marketing manager, Marlin Firearms

"It's [the Chipmunk bolt-action rifle] a great father/son, father/daughter rifle because children can't cock the rifle by themselves until they're seven or eight years old....Christmas is important but don't forget about birthdays. Rimfires make great gifts all year long."

Chris Johnson, vice president, Rogue Rifle Company

 "Another great Christmas gift is our lever-action Golden Boy .22. We'll have good quantities of this rifle available this year."

Anthony Imperato, president, Henry Repeating Arms Company

"When it comes to a gun for Christmas, the Kimber .22 Classic is a great choice....Because our rifles are so accurate, kids will be able to hit what they're aiming at....In the case of the Kimber Classic, the rifle can outshoot the shooter."

Dwight Van Brunt, vice president of marketing and sales, Kimber Firearms¹⁹

"Shooting Teaches Young People Good Things"?

The gun lobby works to portray guns as a marker of maturity, a character-building catalyst that helps mold children into responsible adults. A full-page "I'm the NRA" advertisement featuring actor Tom Selleck that appeared in the March 8, 1999, issue of *Time* magazine promised, "Shooting teaches young people good things. Because all good rules for shooting are good rules for life." Yet real-life examples show that the combination of kids and guns teaches other lessons as well:

- Eleven-year-old Andrew Golden was taught combat shooting by his father.²¹ In March 1998, Golden and 13-year-old Mitchell Johnson ambushed their classmates at Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas, killing four students and a teacher while wounding 10 others.²²
- 15-year-old Kip Kinkel was given a Glock 9mm pistol and a Ruger .22 rifle by his father in an attempt to give the aimless youth a measure of direction and maturity, the very qualities that the gun lobby promises



Taurus advertisement, Shooting Sports Retailer, November/December 2001.

flow from firearm ownership. In May 1998, Kinkel killed his parents, drove to school and opened fire, killing two and wounding 25 others.²³

- On February 15, 1998, two-year-old Cynthia Conrad was unintentionally shot by her nine-year-old cousin in Lemay, Missouri. Cynthia's father Daniel was showing the girls his hunting firearms when he handed a loaded .22 handgun to the nine-year-old. The girl began to drop the handgun and in an attempt to hold onto it, pulled the trigger, firing a shot that struck Cynthia in the forehead.²⁴
- On December 3, 2000, an eleven-year-old boy died in Carroll County, Kentucky when his nine-year-old brother fell and accidently discharged a shotgun while the two were hunting with their father. During the 2001 hunting season in Wisconsin, a 14-year-old shot his 21-year-old brother during a deer drive, a 15-year-old died when he stood up in a blind to see a deer and was shot in the head by his father, and a 13-year-old shot himself in the head when he rested his shotgun on the ground and it fired unexpectedly. 26
- Exposure to lead at shooting ranges is a little known, but all too real threat to children's health. Officials in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, learned of lead contamination at six high school shooting ranges only after one student had a routine blood test unrelated to the shooting program and was found to have elevated lead levels. When blood tests were given to other students in the program, they were also found to have elevated blood lead levels. As a result, the rifle ranges were closed.²⁷

d Lead is a highly potent toxic element that attacks many different human body organs and systems. A number of studies have shown conclusively that children's IQ scores are inversely related to lead exposure. Other effects of lead poisoning include: damage to the brain and central nervous system, kidney disease, high blood pressure, anemia, and damage to the reproductive system. For more information on the dangers of shooting ranges see Tom Diaz, *Poisonous Pastime: The Health Risks of Shooting Ranges to Children, Families, and the Environment* (Washington, DC: Violence Policy Center, 2001)

Conclusion

The gun industry, having saturated their primary market, is working to entice the "next generation" of shooters. The gun industry works to portray its youth marketing efforts as a short-cut for children to learn responsibility and gain maturity. In fact, the gun industry's real goals are long-term fiscal and political viability.

In 1998, 1,971 youths aged 17 and under were killed with guns.²⁸ More than four times that number were wounded in non-fatal shootings.²⁹ The firearms industry and gun lobby should not be allowed to attempt to secure their survival by endangering the lives of another generation of children. Federal law already prohibits the purchase of a handgun from a federally licensed firearms dealer by those under 21 years of age and bars the purchase of long guns by those under 18. The Violence Policy Center recommends that federal law should be simplified to make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to *buy or possess* a long gun and for anyone under the age of 21 to *buy or possess* a handgun.

Appendix: Youth Model Firearms

The following list of youth model firearms was compiled from magazine articles, advertisements, as well as manufacturer catalogs, and details information available from these sources. While not a comprehensive collection of all youth guns available, it illustrates the scope of the effort by the gun industry to market firearms to children.

Rifles

Manufacturer	Model	Caliber	Weight	Barrel Length	Capacity
Anschutz	1451 Sporter Target	22	6.3 lbs.	22"	10 shots
	1451 Beavertail	22	6.6 lbs.	22"	5 shots
Armscor	Model 12Y	22	4 lbs.	18.38"	single shot
	Model 14Y	22	5 lbs.	18.38"	6 shots
Browning	Micro Hunter	22, 223, 7mm, 260, 308, 243	6.25 lbs.	20"	5 shots
	Buck Mark Sporter	22	4.13 lbs.	18"	10 + 1 shots
Connecticut Valley Arms	Youth Hunter	50	5 lbs.	24"	muzzleloader
cz	Scout Youth Rifle	22	4 lbs.	16.2"	10 shots
Charles Daly	Field True Youth	22	3.5 lbs.	16.25"	single shot
	Field Youth Repeater	22	4.75 lbs.	17.5"	6 shots
Henry Repeating Arms Company	Henry Lever Youth Model 22	22	4.5 lbs.		
	Golden Boy	22	9.75 lbs.	20"	16 shots
	Mini Bolt 22	22	3.25 lbs.	16.25"	single shot
Kimber	Classic	22	6.5 lbs.	22"	5 shots
Marlin	Model 15YN	22	4.25 lbs.	16.25"	single shot
New England Firearms	Superlight Handi-Rifle Youth	22, 223, 243	5.3 lbs.	20"	
	Handi-Rifle Youth	223, 243	7 lbs.	22"	
	Sportster Youth	22	5.3 lbs.	20"	

Manufacturer	Model	Caliber	Weight	Barrel Length	Capacity
Remington Arms	Model 700 ADL Synthetic Youth	243, 308	6.75 lbs.	20"	4 shots
	Model 700 ML Youth	50	7.25 lbs.	21"	
Rogue Rifle Co.	Chipmunk	22	2.5 lbs.	16"	
Savage Arms	Model 10GY, 110GY	223, 243, 308, 270	6.2 lbs.	22"	4 shots
	Model Mark I-GY	22	5 lbs.	19"	single shot

Shotguns

Manufacturer	Model	Gauge	Weight	Barrel Length	Capacity
Benelli USA	Montefeltro Short Stock	20	5.3 lbs	24"	4+1 shots
Beretta	AL391 Urika Youth	20	5.7 lbs.	24-26"	2-3 shots
Browning	BPS Micro 20 Gauge	20	6 lbs, 11oz.	22"	4-5 shots
Harrington & Richardson	NWTF Youth Turkey Gun	20	5 lbs.	22"	
	Topper Jr.	20, .410	5-6 lbs.	22"	
	Topper Jr. Classic	20, 28, .410	5-6 lbs.	22"	
New England Firearms	Pardner Youth	20, 28, .410	5.5 lbs	22"	single shot
	NRA Foundation Youth	20, 28, .410	5.5 lbs	22"	single shot
	Turkey Camo Youth	20	5.5 lbs	22"	single shot
Mossberg	Model 500 Field Bantam	20, .410	6 -6.5 lbs	22 - 24"	6 shots
	Model 500 Slugster Bantam Deer	20	6.5 lbs.	24"	6 shots
	Model 500 Camo Bantam Turkey	20	6.5 lbs.	22"	6 shots
	Model 500 Bantam Field/Deer Combo	20	6.25 lbs.	22 - 24"	6 shots
	Model 9200 Crown Grade Bantam	12	6.75 lbs	22"	5 shots
Remington Arms	Model 1100 Youth Synthetic LT-20	20	6.5 lbs	21"	4 shots
	Model 1100 Youth Synthetic Turkey Camo	20	6.75 lbs	21"	4 shots

Manufacturer	Model	Gauge	Weight	Barrel Length	Capacity
	Model 870 Express Youth	20	6 lbs	21"	4 shots
	Model 870 Express Youth Deer Gun	20	6 lbs	20"	4 shots
	Model 870 Express Youth Turkey Camo	20	6 lbs	21"	4 shots

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