

AAP NEWS

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
American Academy of Pediatrics
141 Northwest Point Blvd. • Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

AAP News, the official newsmagazine of the American Academy of Pediatrics, is dedicated to informing, educating and inspiring readers on matters related to pediatric health care.

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SECOND OPINIONS

Photo troubling

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention my concern about an article which appeared on page 33 of the September issue of AAP News. This article presented a review of a manuscript published in the March 1999 issue of *Ophthalmology*. The purpose of the article was to bring to the attention of readers the fact that proper eye protection should be worn by people who play paintball, a game in which air guns are used to shoot pellets filled with water-soluble paint at participants in the game. Although the purpose of the article was to stress the need for eye protection for participants of this game, there are disturbing aspects about the presentation of this article.

1. The picture accompanying the article shows a person, presumably a child, dressed in camouflage, aiming a long-barreled gun at a target, presumably another person. This graphic picture is inappropriate for AAP News.

2. The article appears to condone this game in which guns are aimed at others. Within the context of this article, there was not a disclaimer from the Academy about children participating in games in which guns are used to shoot objects at other children.

Numerous articles have been written in AAP News about the use of guns to kill children in the United States, including a March 1999 letter from Dr. Joel Alpert, then AAP president. Dr. Alpert reported that in 1995 there were 93 deaths from guns in Japan, 1,189 in Canada and 39,000 in the United States. As Dr. Alpert correctly stated, "Gun violence in schools is an epidemic, and it is spreading."

The Academy must be strong in its stance about gun control. The picture chosen for the article appears to glamorize the use of guns and is inappropriate. In addition, the Academy missed an opportunity to include a disclaimer in the article about the use of guns by children in these games to shoot at other children.

This presentation weakens and undermines the Academy's position on gun control. We need to become more sensitive to all aspects of this issue.

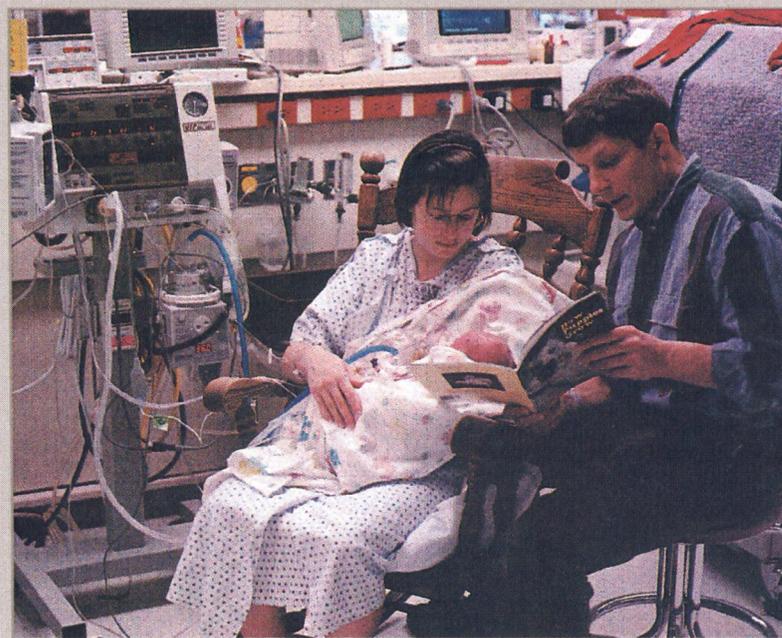
Larry K. Pickering, M.D., FAAP
Norfolk, Va.

Editor's note: The photo in question was used only to demonstrate to consumers the appropriate use of equipment.

Not bad, just deadly

"There is no such thing as a bad boy." This phrase came to mind after reading the letters from Keith Johnson, M.D., FAAP, and Tom Malinich, M.D., FAAP, (August 1999), who seem to think that "there is no such thing as a bad gun." I would like to know how they feel about child-friendly automobile trunk releases described on page 8 of that same issue. After all, if every-

PORTRAIT



New chapter in NICU therapy

In Books for Babies, pioneered in the Springfield, Mo., Cox Health Systems neonatal intensive care unit, every infant receives a personalized book for parents to read softly at each visit. Besides enhancing bonding, the program helps uncover parents' reading problems for referral to literacy tutors. For more information, contact Colleen Rose, M.D., FAAP, at (417) 269-6184, or Carla Molter at (417) 269-8809.

one carried a gun we could just shoot off the locks and avoid still more unnecessary regulations.

Ernest Ciambarella, M.D., FAAP
Cincinnati

Thanks, Bob Sanders

I would like to correct an error in a recent issue. Florida, indeed, was the first state to achieve a child health assurance (CHIRP) bill, in 1986. It was the first state to pass the Child Restraint bill *on the first try*. However, the *first* state to pass the Automobile Restraint Bill for Infants and Children was Tennessee, under the dedicated and devoted leadership of Bob Sanders, M.D., FAAP. This wonderful, unselfish gentleman served as an inspiration and help to all of us who followed. With much gratitude to him,

Arnold L. "Bud" Tanis, M.D., FAAP
Hollywood, Fla.

Mixed messages?

Regarding two articles in AAP News (October):

"Academy sets policy quickly ..." "But in between these magnificent sights, he spent countless hours in phone booths discussing how the Academy should respond ..." "I'd be tying up the phone for three hours" and "no clocks and no calendars."

"Monitor signs of stress ..." "This goal will be achieved through the development of learning opportunities that emphasize health promotion, stress reduction and time management techniques." "One health issue of great concern to AAP Fellows is mental health," "long work hours" and "perfectionism and other self-imposed pressures."

So, what message are you trying to convey? Work hard, even on your off-hours, or reduce stress and live hap-