

Our View: Curiosity, kids and the death of the cat

Lindsey Treffry/Moscow-Pullman Daily News Editorial Board

Children are curious creatures, often peeping through closets and boxes in high or low places. While at a friend's house, a child can discover old diary entries by their friend's big sister, the Halloween candy stash or sometimes, a gun.

In January, a 4-year-old Detroit boy and 4-year-old female cousin found a gun under a bed, pulled it out and began to play with it. The boy was accidentally shot and killed. In early July, a 12-year-old boy accidentally shot his friend in the head with pellet gun in Palm Beach County, Fla. The friend, luckily, survived. Closer to home, a 5-year-old girl from Blackfoot, Idaho, was accidentally shot and killed during a playdate on July 30 by her same-aged friend.

Only half of the states in the U.S. have enacted laws to hold adults criminally liable if they provide guns to minors or fail to store guns safely, enabling children to access them. Washington and Idaho, unfortunately, are not on that list.

Actually, about 1.7 million children live in homes that contain a loaded, unlocked gun, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence says. Stopping children from discovering those guns, or educating parents on safe gun storage, is what the local chapter of the Brady Campaign is hoping to address.

The campaign, which has formed at the local level and can be found at today's Moscow Farmers Market, calls on parents to ask each other about whether they have firearms in their homes and how they keep them away from children and teens. It should be as easy as talking about a peanut allergy or 10 p.m. curfew.

In a study of 295 accidental gun deaths of children under 15, The New York Times found 49 percent of those deaths occurred at home, 22 percent at an acquaintance's home and 13 percent at a relative's home.

So, if you're a parent, have you had "the talk"? Better yet, reflect on how guns are stored in your own home. It could save children's lives, or even your own kin.