

# Teach Em Young

Little Rocco, and his even younger cousin Brennon, did their very best to keep up on the debris strewn forest ridgeline. I made an extra effort to slow down and take it much slower than usual as we painstakingly maneuvered our way around the windfalls and old pinestump clusters. We had been sneaking up on the chattering fox squirrel for the better part of this beautiful morning, and the excitement I saw in the boys' eyes was more fun for me than any hunt I had ever been on. You would think we were stalking T-Rex with a spear based on the electric anticipation in the air this sunny fall day. Though the tykes were only seven and five years of age, they climbed and moved along like they were on a special-forces mission to save the world. Serious yet energized. I carried the .22 rifle and we kept trudging along, closing the distance to our big game quarry. Every few yards we would pause to listen, and with their superior hearing, they pointed with giddy joy at the source of the occasional squirrel noise ahead. Their eyes bulged and toothy smiles widened the closer we got. Once in a while they would ask about the origin of a woodpecker hammering, a birdsong or the flight of a flushed bird. As they walked and trotted behind me, they would pick up pinecones, old bones, interesting sticks and rocks, and as usual, they showed intense fascination with the wild world around them. I simply glowed with joy every step of the way, knowing that all

*Ted Nugent*

*With unlimited evidence all around, a deep understanding for the value of the gift of life is immediately grasped by even the youngest of children when identified and explained by a caring adult.*

these educational experiences were exactly what this traditional hunt was all about. The Spirit of the Wild was permeating their entire being. It just don't get no better than this.

We never did get that evasive bushytail on that particular morning hunt, though on subsequent outings we managed to bag some quality BBQ limbrat critters for the grill. But the laughter, intrigue, excitement, lessons, discipline, challenge, excersize and outright fun and laughter we have everytime we get out there is worth its weight in spiritual gold for the kids and myself, providing us with the absolute best quality time together that you could ever imagine. The early predawn revelry alone does wonders for a youngster, teaching them hat the

early bird does indeed get the most fun worm there is. The natural interest and fascination they show in wildlife and the flora and fauna of these outdoor adventures inspires their demand for knowledge. This hands-on classroom provides valuable lessons in resource appreciation and stewardship that is so terribly missing in today's educational system. I know for a fact that they quickly learn the logic of supply and demand that the tooth, fang and claw rules of nature teach them. With unlimited evidence all around, a deep understanding for the value of the gift of life is immediately grasped by even the youngest of children when identified and explained by a caring adult. They witness for themselves that the cycle of life and death is a powerful reality that only a fool would deny. I have discovered profound gratification and fulfillment as a parent when we take a rest together on a sunny hillside with the serenity of the forest bringing out the best in us. Plinking with a .22 rifle teaches them discipline and the joys of a job well done through concentration and dedication that is even more impacting than the typical ball sports kids play. The breathing, sight articulation and trigger control necessary for good marksmanship, and the resultant joys of bullseyes and plinked tincans, goes straight to a kids



memory bank, and will come in real handy when it comes to academics, athletics, relationships, peer pressure, work ethic, and pretty much everything meaningful in life. Even instant gratification takes time in the great outdoors.

I get a lot of email and questions at tednugent.com asking me at what age I would recommend a parent teach a child to shoot a gun or bow. With the ugly options staring kids in the face these days, I heartily recommend you start them early. Real early. All you have to do is meet my wonderful, courteous kids, Star, Sasha, Toby and Rocco, and you will immediately know that they are the kind of children every parent hopes for. They all started shooting BB-guns and pellet rifles and handguns when they were only four and five years of age. Extreme focus on safety and rules were the most important first step each and everytime we brought out the guns, and it has really paid off over the years. Never pointing any gun at anything you're not willing to destroy is the only rule that matters. Dire consequences would result from any infraction whatsoever. Accountability is the ultimate lesson.

Our Chipmunk, youth bolt-action, scoped .22 rifle, loaded up with quiet CB

caps, was the best tool for teaching proper gun handling. This properly designed and fitted, child-sized rifle, with these minimum-power cartridges, provide the perfect combination for recreational plinking and informal shooting competition for even the youngest of kids. We had a BB-gun a pellet-rifle range in our living-room, with a properly constructed backstop in the fireplace at twenty-five feet for complete safety and effective shooting fun. All the kids from school craved the opportunity at the Nugent house for this incredibly attractive activity. All the parents loved it too.

The same goes for archery fun. Just as important as the fit of the youth rifle, a bow and arrow set up for youngsters must match the shooter. In order for a kid to truly enjoy the shooting sports, they must be comfortable

with the equipment. My kids, like so many in America, started out with a child's rubber tipped archery set for pure, natural fun. As early as four years of age, they would become intrigued with the mystical flight of the arrow. They didn't know it at the time, but their fascination with projectiles was in fact a natural instinct to develop and improve their hand-eye coordination in order to increase the accuracy of that next arrow or bullet. That's what is really taking place in the shooting sports. The individual challenge of excellence is what drives us to keep trying to make a better shot, and again, that discipline goes to the very core of being the best that we can be, no matter what the endeavor. Sure beats the hell out the scourge of electronic, zombie inducing games and the horror of

prolonged TV time! Think about it.

There's not a place in America where any family lives more than a ten-minute drive from a quality sporting goods store with expert advise on equipment and a place to shoot. Membership in the NRA and a regional sport and shooting club will provide valuable information and connections to optimize the opportunities for such quality family outdoor time. In my homestate of Michigan, for example, you couldn't do better than join the Michigan United Conservation Clubs for immediate access to vast information and places to shoot at every imaginable level.

Fortunately, there is more and more focus these days on providing entry level shooting opportunities for the whole family, particularly

women and children. When you find yourselves resting on a beautiful, sunny National or State Forest ridge someday with your family, be sure you take it all in, knowing you are celebrating one of the most joyous activities you could possibly undertake as a family. You are steering your kids on a TruNorth compass setting that will pay off in quality of life dividends for the rest of their lives. It's easy, it's good, it's fun and it's important. Join us at tednugent.com, TalkBack, anytime, to share your experiences and thoughts on this wonderful American Dream.

For great information on outdoor opportunities across America, subscribe to Ted Nugent Adventure Outdoors magazine at 800-343-4868 or at tednugent.com

America's Battery Experts

**BATTERIES PLUS**

Your One-Stop  
Hunting & Fishing  
Battery  
HEADQUARTERS

WHAT YOU WANT...WHAT YOU NEED...IN-STOCK!

Rechargeable & Camo Flashlights  
Cell Phones • Camcorders • More!

ATV • Deep Cycle Batteries  
Robo-Duck • Trolling Motors

1000's Of Batteries For 1000's Of Items

**BATTERIES PLUS**

601.977.8123

5844 Ridgewood Road • Jackson (Across from Brookshire's) • www.batteriesplus.com

## WARNING

**NOT SUPPORTING  
LOCALLY OWNED  
HUNTING AND  
FISHING STORES  
CAN BE  
HAZARDOUS TO  
THEIR SURVIVAL!**

**DON'T TRADE PERSONALIZED,  
KNOWLEDGEABLE, FACE TO FACE  
SERVICE FOR A COUPLE OF  
BUCKS IN SAVINGS AT THE  
"BIG STORE FROM OUT OF STATE"!**

**BUY SOMETHING AT YOUR LOCAL  
SPORTING STORE TODAY.  
YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID!**