



Youth Learn to Hunt Programs

Practical answers to common questions about youth and R3

Chapter Questions	What the research suggests	What this means for our Learn to Hunt programs
"Do youth Learn to Hunt programs actually create new hunters?"	They can, but simply attending a youth hunt does not demonstrate that someone became a hunter. Long-term evidence is limited.	Our goal should be more than providing a good first experience. We should create a pathway that gives participants a reason and opportunity to hunt again.
"If a kid has a great experience, won't they naturally keep hunting?"	Not necessarily. Positive experiences are important, but continued participation depends heavily on access, skills, social support and opportunities to hunt again.	Always provide a next step. Give participants a clear opportunity to continue hunting, learn another skill, attend another event or connect with a mentor.
"Is taking kids hunting enough?"	A single hunting experience is unlikely to reproduce the years of socialization that traditionally occur within hunting families.	Think beyond the event. The event should be one step in a longer recruitment pathway—not the entire recruitment strategy.
"Does having an adult mentor solve the recruitment problem?"	Mentoring is valuable, but research has found that simply matching youth with an adult mentor does not necessarily result in greater future hunting participation.	Mentorship works best as an ongoing relationship, not simply having an adult present during one hunt.
"Should we prioritize kids who already have hunting families?"	These youth already have a pathway into hunting. Programs can therefore end up reinforcing existing participation rather than recruiting someone who otherwise would not hunt.	Know who you're recruiting. If recruitment is the objective, consider whether you're reaching youth who lack a parent, relative or other pathway into hunting.

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“Does that mean we shouldn't have youth Learn to Hunt events?”	No. Youth programs can provide valuable experiences, skills, positive attitudes and connections to hunting.	Youth programs have value—but we should be honest about what success looks like. A successful event isn't necessarily the same thing as a successfully recruited hunter.
“Would adults actually be a better recruitment target?”	Research suggests adult recruitment can be more efficient than youth recruitment at increasing the number of active hunters.	Youth are not the only R3 audience. Chapters should consider youth, families and adults as different audiences with different recruitment needs.
“Why do we keep hearing that social support is so important?”	Hunting is strongly influenced by family, friends, mentors, access, knowledge and a person's social environment.	Build community around the participant. Help them find people to hunt with, not just someone to teach them how to hunt once.
“How should we measure whether our youth program worked?”	Attendance, satisfaction and knowledge gains are useful, but they don't demonstrate recruitment. Actual hunting participation is the stronger outcome.	Track the pathway: attended → learned skills → went hunting → obtained license → hunted again → continued hunting. This can be done with surveys - always collect contact information!
“Is getting someone their first hunting experience considered recruitment?”	It is better described as recruitment activity or an initial intervention. Recruitment success requires evidence of subsequent participation.	Don't undersell the event but don't overclaim its impact. A first hunt is an important step toward recruitment, not proof of recruitment.
“What makes a strong Learn to Hunt program?”	The strongest evidence points toward structured experiences that build skills, confidence, social connections and opportunities for continued participation.	Design the whole pathway, not just the hunt. Participants should leave knowing what to do next and who they can do it with.