

Curious Kids Set Fires

Teaching Children Fire Safety

Figures show that each year about 150 people are killed and \$200 million in property is destroyed in fires attributed to children playing with fire.

The U. S. Fire Administration (USFA) encourages parents to teach children at nearly age about the dangers of fire play in an effort to prevent child injuries, fire deaths and fire setting behavior in the future. Below are some facts about children and fire safety.

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Children under five are curious about fire. Often what begins as a natural exploration of the unknown can lead to tragedy.

- Children of all ages set over 35,000 fires annually. Approximately 8,000 of those fires are set in homes.
- Children make up 15-20% of all fire deaths.
- At home, children usually play with fire in bedrooms, in closets and under beds. These are "secret" places where there are a lot of things that catch fire easily.
- Too often, child fire setters are not given proper guidance and supervision by parents and teachers. Consequently, they repeat their fire setting behavior. Practice Fire safety in your Home
- Supervise young children closely. Do not leave them alone even for short periods of time.
- Keep matches and lighters in a secured drawer or cabinet.
- Have your children tell you when they find matches and lighters.
- Check under beds and in closets for burned matches, evidence your child may be playing with fire.
- Develop a home fire escape plan, practice it with your children and designate a meeting place outside.
- Take the mystery out of fire play by teaching children that fire is a tool, not a toy.
- Teach children the nature of fire. It is FAST, HOT, DARK and DEADLY!
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters, but to get out quickly and call for help from another location.
- Show children how to crawl low on the floor, below the smoke, to get out of the house and stay out in the case of fire.
- Demonstrate how to stop, drop to the ground and roll if their clothes catch fire.
- Install smoke alarms on every level in your home.
- Familiarize children with the sound of your smoke alarm.
- Test the smoke alarm each month and replace the battery at least once a year.
- Replace the smoke alarm every ten years, or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Finally, having a working smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire. And remember to practice a home escape plan frequently with your family.

For more information contact:

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Visit the USFA Web site:

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