



For further information contact:



**MISSOURI DIVISION
OF FIRE SAFETY**
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- ❖ Most children do not realize how quickly fires spread and how difficult they are to put out.
- ❖ Most children do not understand how badly fire can injure them and that if their clothes are burning, their skin will burn too.
- ❖ Most children think they will wake up if they smell smoke, when in fact, carbon monoxide makes them drowsy.

**Teachers, Counselors, and
Community Leaders . . .**

Take Responsibility for Fire Safety

- ❖ Teach fire safety behaviors in preschool through high school programs.
- ❖ Participate in training to learn about juvenile firesetters.
- ❖ Help raise awareness in your community about juvenile firesetters.
- ❖ Know the resources in your community to help juvenile firesetters, or help develop a youth fire safety coalition.

**FIREPLAY?
OR
FIRESETTING?**



**JUVENILE
FIRESETTERS**

**WHAT YOU
CAN DO!**



Fire Is Not a Toy

The National Fire Protection Association reports fires set by children yearly result in:

- 🔥 95,000 Fires
- 🔥 300 Deaths
- 🔥 3,000 Injuries
- 🔥 \$300,000,000 in loss

Children themselves are usually the victims of these fires, accounting for 85 of every 100 lives lost.

- 🔥 40% of all set fires are caused by children
- 🔥 Most children who set fires are between the ages of 5 and 9
- 🔥 95% of those fires are set at home

Why Children Set Fires

Most experts agree the best way to understand firesetting behavior is to look at where and why children set fires. They believe there are two basic types of children who start fires.



CURIOSITY FIRESETTERS are typically between the ages of 2 and 7 years; and have a fascination with the way fire feels and burns, and what it does. This curiosity leads them to “play” with fire. These children do not understand fire’s destructive potential. Although curiosity is a normal part of children’s growth and development, parents and other adults who discover that a child is playing with fire should take it very seriously and seek assistance.

PROBLEM FIRESETTERS can also be very young, but generally are 5 to 17 years old. In contrast to the curious firesetter, however, these youngsters start fires because of emotional or mental situations ranging from mild to severe. A crisis in the child’s life, such as moving to a new area, a divorce or death, could trigger firesetting behavior. Or, a more serious situation could be the cause. Chronic behaviors such as a poor relationship with other children, cruelty to animals, and extreme mood changes are a few of the traits that data on juvenile firesetters has revealed. It is a problem that needs the attention of parents, teachers, counselors, and community leaders, in cooperation with fire and law enforcement agencies.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO!

Teach Your Child About Fire

- 🔥 Fire is a tool we use to heat our homes or cook our food.
- 🔥 Fire is dangerous - it can kill.
- 🔥 All fires - even small ones - can spread quickly.
- 🔥 Even adults must follow special safety rules for fire.

Control Your Child’s Access to Fire

- 🔥 Keep all matches and lighters out of the reach of children - even a 2 year old can operate a cigarette lighter.
- 🔥 Never allow anyone to use lighters or matches in an unsafe manner in your home.
- 🔥 Never leave cooking or candle fires unattended.
- 🔥 Teach children to show you any unattended matches or lighters they find.

Set a Good Example

- 🔥 Install and maintain smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- 🔥 Plan and practice home fire escape drills.
- 🔥 Regularly inspect your home for fire hazards.
- 🔥 Always use "safety sense" when making or using fire.