

HOW TO PREVENT FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR

A parent can do a lot to prevent children from being involved with fire. Children look to parents for guidance, leadership, and as a role model. Listed below are some tips to help you deal with firesetting behaviors you might encounter.

1. Lead by example. You cannot expect your child to treat fire any differently than you do.
2. Explain why they cannot use fire. Simply saying DON'T is not good enough. Think about how you react when you are told that.
3. Treat matches and lighters like tools. Give these items the same respect you would other dangerous tools around your home (for example: knives, kitchen appliances, hammers, etc.)
4. Keep matches and lighters out of reach of all children. Better yet, remove all unnecessary matches and lighters from your home completely. Most children are only involved with fire because it is available.
5. Reward children for making right decisions with matches and lighters. Also, make clear the punishment for the wrong use of matches and lighters.
6. Encourage your child's school to; promote fire safety in the classroom.

REMEMBER: If you are uncomfortable with your ability to deal with your child's firesetting behavior, call your local Fire Department for additional help.

Your local fire department has a program to deal with children who have been involved with fire:

THE CHILD FIRESETTING AND JUVENILE ARSON INTERVENTION PROGRAM

is an educational program designed to educate parents and children about fire safety and the consequences of fire. Each family meets individually with a firefighter trained in firesetting intervention techniques. The firefighter will discuss and help the family better understand how to deal with the problem. If a child is beyond what fire safety education can resolve, we can provide assistance by referring you to the most appropriate help for your needs.

If you have any questions relating to firesetting or fire issues in general, call:

Fire safety Starts at Home

Your Safety is Your Responsibility

It's the

Moment

You're Not There



Children and Fire
Don't Mix:



Utah Department of Public Safety



Office of the State Fire Marshal
5272 South College Dr. Suite 302
Murray, UT 84123
801-284-6350

WHAT IS FIRESETTING?

We call children firesetters when they have begun to use fire in a way that is dangerous or not approved by a parent. The term firesetter does not mean a child has a problem. The majority of children should be gaining all the information they need to be safe with fire at home and in school. These are areas you can help control.

FIRESETTING MYTHS

- Myth:** It is normal for children to play with fire.
- Fact:** While curiosity about fire is common, use without a parent's approval or knowledge is dangerous to the child and anyone around them.
- Myth:** If you burn a child's hand, they will stop.
- Fact:** Burns only create fear and scars. The reason behind fire use must be discovered and addressed.
- Myth:** It is a phase the child will grow out of.
- Fact:** It is not a phase. It is a dangerous behavior. You cannot afford to wait for fire behavior to change. It only takes one match to cause serious injury or death.
- Myth:** Some children are obsessed with fire.
- Fact:** In reality, very few children are obsessed or would be considered pyromaniacs. There is almost always a reason behind the behavior.

FIRESETTING DIFFERENCES

By determining the motivation for the firesetting, we can best determine how to deal with it. Most children fall into the following classifications:

Curiosity:

- Children are usually young
- Fire is usually paper or other valueless objects
- Children will be secretive
- Children will usually fear the consequences of their actions
- Children may have ready access to matches and lighters around the home
- Children may not fully understand the parents rules regarding fire use around the home
- Parents may be setting a bad example for children as they use matches and lighters for everyday tasks

Treatment: Fire safety Education



Troubled:

- Children may be any age
- There may be no apparent reason for the firesetting behavior
- Firesetting may occur during times of personal or family stress
- Firesetting may accompany other acting out behaviors
- Children may also be experiencing problems in school or with friends
- Firesetting is often meant to destroy clothes, toys, or other items of personal property that belong to them or others

Treatment: Family Fire Safety Education and/or Counseling Assistance

Delinquent:

- Usually older children and adolescents
- Firesetting is usually in association with other rebellious behavior
- There may be other children involved
- Firesetting may occur with other acts of vandalism
- Children show little or no regard for others around them
- Firesetting behavior is often accompanied by anger, depression, or other unresolved feelings the child may have

Treatment: Family Fire Safety Education and Counseling Assistance

IF YOU NEED HELP

When firesetting goes beyond what you are able to deal with, call your local fire department. Most fire agencies can provide fire safety education for your family. Many have specific programs to deal with children who have been involved with fire

Do not put off dealing with this behavior. Fire is a devastating and deadly force.