

**What do you do if you
think your family
needs help?**

**Contact
Fire Stoppers
907-346-2888**

- Screening
- Education
- Referral

Fire...

is the only weapon of mass
destruction we leave within our
children's reach without a
second thought!

Parent Tips...



STEP ONE:

- Contact Fire Stoppers
for assistance

907-346-2888

STEP TWO:

**Create a Safe Home
Environment**

- Lock up all Matches
and Lighters
- Check your Smoke
Alarms

STEP THREE:

- Teach children that fire is a tool for
use by grown-ups
- Set a good example, children learn by
watching and imitating adults
- Ask young children to tell you when
they find matches and lighters, and
put them away.
- Teach older children proper
techniques in using fire and fire
tools - how to safely strike a match
or light a candle with supervision.

**Alaska Injury
Prevention Center**



3701 East Tudor, Suite 105
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

**Do you know where the
matches and lighters are
in your home?**

**Your children do.
Just ask them.**



Indiana University Medical Center, Riley Hospital for Children Burn Unit

**Keep children safe,
always lock up your
matches and lighters.**

Fire Stoppers 907-346-2888

Problem:

Children playing with fire - second leading cause for injuries in the home...

During the five-year period from 1994 through 1998, children playing with fire in the home caused an average of:

18,200 Structure Fires
289 Civilian Fire Deaths
2,056 Civilian Fire Injures
239.6 million in Direct Property Damage

NFPA

*The U.S. Fire Problem Overview Report
Leading Causes and Other Patterns and
Trends June 2001*

Is Juvenile Arson a Problem?

The FBI Crime Index Reports that Juvenile and Adult Arson Cause an Annual Average of 560,000 Fires, 750 Deaths 3,700 Injuries, \$1.5 Billion in Property Loss.

- 55% of all arson arrests in the U.S. are children under 18
- Nearly half of these are age 15 and under
- 6.8% are under age 10
- The crime of arson has the highest rate of juvenile involvement

Why do Children Misuse fire?

Children Misuse fire for many different reasons

Curiosity/Experimental

- Boys & Girls ages 2-10 (sometimes younger)
- Lack of understanding about the destructive potential of fire
- Ready access to lighters, matches or open flame
- Limited Supervision

Troubled Firesetters

- Use fire to express anger, sadness, frustration and powerless feelings related to stress or major changes in their life
- May not understand the consequences of uncontrolled fire
- Will continue to set fires until needs are identified and met
- May be a cry for help

Delinquent/Criminal

- Usually teens with a history of firesetting, truancy, antisocial behavior or drug/alcohol abuse
- Fires are set with intent to destroy, or as acts of vandalism and malicious mischief

Emotionally Disturbed

- Fires may be random, ritualized, or with specific intent to destroy property (arson)
- Chronic history of school behavioral, social, emotional or physical problems

Dispelling Myths

Myths

- "Don't all children play with fire?"
- "Playing with fire is a stage they'll grow out of..."
- "It was just a small fire, they were just playing..."

Facts

- Interest in fire, for children, is natural, **continued firesetting is not!**
- Children, as young as age 3, need to be taught about fire - what it is, what it does, and what it can do if out of control.
- All big fires start small!

Myths

- "Juvenile firesetters are pyromaniacs!"
- "Punishing or scaring children will make them stop playing with and setting fires."
- "Show them photos of burn victims or people/animals who die in fire. That will stop the behavior"

Facts

- The majority of juvenile firesetters are **ordinary children in need:**
 - some are curious and experimental about fire (in need of education)
 - some are troubled (in need of counseling or other community services)

Facts

- Punishment and scare tactics do not **teach** a child about fire.
- Children need to be educated about fire and fire tools.

Child Firesetting

For every one child-set fire we know of, at least ten more have occurred. By the time we see a child, they have set at least ten fires and there are more than ten children who haven't been caught.

*Source: Study by Schwarzman, Cole
Laurentitis, Gruinick*