



BUSY MOM'S Guide to Home Fire Safety

Child-Playing Fires

Children are naturally curious about fire, setting over 100,000 fires each year. In fact, child-playing fires are the leading cause of fire deaths among preschoolers.

QUICK STATS

- Children playing with fire cause hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries each year.
- Preschoolers are most likely to start these fires, typically by playing with matches and lighters, and many are likely to die in them.
- More than half of all child-playing fires start in the bedroom.
- Roughly two out of three child playing fires—and three out of four deaths and injuries—involve matches and lighters.
- Among fatal home fires started by children playing, seven out of 10 involve children igniting bedding, mattresses, upholstered furniture or clothing.
- Children also start fires by playing with candles, fireworks, stoves and cigarettes.
- A flame resistant mattress pad and box spring cover can help give you a level of protection similar to the new CPSC safety standard.



Here are five things you can do to make your home immediately safer.

- 1.** Get rid of all matches and lighters. If you need a flame source, purchase a child-safe lighter and store it in a locked cabinet out of your child's reach. Remember that child-safe does not mean child-proof.
- 2.** Never use lighters or matches as a source of amusement for children. Children imitate adults.
- 3.** Have your children tell you when they find matches and lighters. Tell them to bring them to an adult immediately.
- 4.** Store all candles, incense and cigarettes in a locked cabinet in your home. Never leave flammable objects out where children can find them. If you have fireworks, keep them in your garage where your child can't reach them.
- 5.** Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home and in every bedroom. Tell your child to get out of the house immediately if a fire starts. Children who set fires often try to hide them or put them out, a situation that can quickly become fatal as the fire spreads.

Talk to Your Kids About Fire

"Never play with matches and lighters.."

"If you see matches or lighters lying around, bring them to an adult right away."

"If you see a fire inside, get out immediately. Fire and smoke are dangerous and get out-of-control very fast."

"Fire is a tool for adults only. It is not a toy."

FACTS & TIPS: Recognizing & Preventing Fire-Setting Behavior in Children

- Fire-setting behavior occurs most often in young children between the ages of 3 and 7 who find matches or lighters within easy reach.
- Check for burnt matches under beds and inside closets, places where children will "hide" if they are doing something they know is wrong.
- Scorched materials around the house and the smell of smoke are additional indicators that someone may be playing with fire in the home.
- Younger children are naturally curious about fire and parents are often the first to notice this behavior.
- As children expand their horizons into schools and communities, the fires they set move beyond the house.
- If your child is setting fires, immediate intervention is necessary: 1/3 of all children killed by fire set the fire themselves.
- Left untreated, 81% of firesetters will repeat their dangerous actions.

FIRE-SETTING CAN SOMETIMES SIGNAL CHILDREN IN CRISIS

Crisis fire setters use fires to call attention to problems they are struggling with, such as recent changes in the family, school problems or another source of trauma. They set highly symbolic fires which point to the source of their stress. These children need a two part intervention that combines fire education with counseling.

FOR MORE RESOURCES:

Visit www.firedefendersystem.com for more home fire-safety information and links.