

## CONTROLLING YOUR CHILD'S ACCESS TO FIRE

- ◆ Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach! Store them on a high shelf.
- ◆ Never let children play around the stove when cooking.
- ◆ Instruct children to tell adults whenever they see carelessly discarded matches, lighters or if they see another child playing with fire.
- ◆ Allow your curious child to assist you in making fire and heat related activities safe.
- ◆ Never leave any open flame, candles, lit cigarettes or cooking unattended.
- ◆ Never create a camp fire for cooking in your yard without having a water supply ready.
- ◆ Keep flammable liquids out of your children's reach. Children tend to use flammable liquids to help start or to set fires.
- ◆ Make sure your fireplace has a screen in front of it and your child knows to stay away from the fire.

## SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE

- ⇒ Model safe practices— such as wearing tight-fitting sleeves, using pot holders and turning pan handles in while cooking.
- ⇒ Do not purchase or keep novelty lighters in your house.
- ⇒ Never play “tricks” with a lighter or matches.
- ⇒ Make sure your woodstove is installed properly and explain how it helps heat the house.
- ⇒ After using your fireplace, remove all ashes by placing them in a metal can with a lid and storing them outside your home.
- ⇒ Explain how matches are a TOOL not a TOY.
- ⇒ All flammable liquids should be stored outside never in basements near heaters, furnace etc.
- ⇒ Have an established home escape plan. Make sure your relatives or guests adopt your rules while in your home.
- ⇒ Check your smoke detectors each month to make sure they are in working order.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

### SMOKE SIGNALS Fire Safety Intervention Program for Children and Adolescents

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## SMOKE SIGNALS FIRE-SETTERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Telephone 856-234-1222

## Curious Kids Set Fires

*What parents can do to  
address curiosity in a positive  
manner...*



*before tragedy occurs.*

## Curious Kids Set Fires

Children under five are curious about fire. One of the ways young children learn about and explore their environment is through play.

Often what begins as a natural exploration of the unknown can lead to tragedy.

At home children typically play with fire in bedrooms, in closets and under beds. These are their secret places where there are many things that can catch fire easily.

Most young children are not given sufficient education and guidance regarding fire and its dangers.

Unfortunately, as a result, they may repeat their fire-setting behavior.

THE MOORESTOWN “SMOKE SIGNALS” PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO DETERMINE THE RISK FACTOR LEVEL OF FIRESETTING THROUGH INFORMAL INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARENTS AND CHILD.

## Signs that your child is curious about fire

- You find evidence of burnt paper, cloth and empty book matches around their room, under beds or inside closets.
- The child may stare at or seem fascinated with fire. They want to be real close to the fire.
- They may show a strong curiosity to touch and/or carry matches or lighters.
- Clothing frequently smells like smoke.
- Burnt fingers could indicate attempts of playing with fire.

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**MYTH :** It is normal for children to play with fire.

**FACT :** While curiosity about fire is common, fire play is not and can have devastating consequences.

**MYTH :** It is “just a phase ” and the child will “grow out of it. ”

**FACT :** Fire-setting is not a phase and parents should deal with it immediately or it could possibly escalate.

**MYTH :** If the fires are small, no big deal.

**FACT :** All fires start small. Any fire set by a child, no matter the size, has the potential to harm the child and others.

The tragedies caused by child firesetting and playing with fire can be prevented by teaching children about fire, controlling their access to fire and setting a good example!

- ⇒ Teach children that fire is useful not magical.
- ⇒ Discuss the positive uses of fire, i.e. cooking food and home heating etc.
- ⇒ Teach children the nature of fire—it is **fast, hot and deadly**. It can quickly get out of control and be very dangerous if not handled properly.
- ⇒ Teach children to report unsafe fire play by others.
- ⇒ Teach children how to be careful around open flames, i.e. candles, fireplaces, camp fires, gas stove cooking and barbecues.
- ⇒ Teach children how to stop, drop, and roll if their clothes catch on fire.