
Fire Safety Discussion Points

Use the following fire safety and prevention information to lead discussions.

Control Kids' Access to Fire

- Keep all matches and lighters out of the hands of children. If possible, keep these sources of fire in locked drawers. Consider buying only "child-proof" lighters—but be aware that no product is completely child-proof.
- Children as young as two years old can strike matches and start fires.
- Never leave children unattended near operating stoves or burning candles, even for a short time.
- Teach children not to pick up matches or lighters they may find. Instead, they should tell an adult immediately.

Fire Safety at Home

- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the home, especially near sleeping areas.
- Smoke alarms should be kept clean of dust by regularly vacuuming over and around them.
- Replace batteries in smoke alarms at least once a year. And replace the entire unit after ten years of service, or as the manufacturer recommends.
- Families should plan and practice two escape routes from each room of their home.
- Regularly inspect the home for fire hazards.
- If there are adults in the home who smoke, they should use heavy safety ashtrays and discard ashes and butts in metal, sealed containers or the toilet.
- If there is a fireplace in the home, the entire opening should be covered by a heavy safety screen. The chimney should be professionally inspected and cleaned annually.
- Children should cook only under the supervision of an adult or with their

permission.

- Children should never play with electrical cords or electrical sockets. They should ask adults for help plugging in equipment.
- Children should stay away from radiators and heaters, and they should be taught that these devices are not toys. Young children in particular must be taught not to play with or drop anything into space heaters. Nothing should be placed or stored on top of a heater.
- Pots on stovetops should always have their handles turned toward the center of the stove, where children cannot reach up and pull or knock them off.
- Teach children to turn off lights, stereos, TVs, and other electrical equipment when they are finished using them. In the case of room heaters, children should ask an adult to turn it off when the room will be empty.
- Children should never touch matches, lighters, or candles. If they find matches or lighters within reach, they should ask an adult to move them.
- No one should stand too close to a fireplace or wood stove or other types of heaters, where clothes could easily catch fire.

Warning Signs

- Evidence of fire play, such as burnt matches, clothes, paper, toys, etc., or if you smell smoke in hair or clothes.
- Inappropriate interest in firefighters and/or fire trucks, such as frequent, improper calls to the fire department or 9-1-1.
- Child asks or tries to light cigarettes or candles for you or other adults.
- Matches or lighters in their pockets or rooms.

Control Curiosity

- Talk to your child or students in a calm, assured manner about fire safety.
- Consider visiting a fire station if children are very interested in firefighting and/or fire trucks or ask a firefighter to visit your classroom. Have the firefighter talk about his/her job and the dangers of fire.
- For parents: Create opportunities for learning about fire safety at home. For example, when you cook, let your child get the pot holder for you; when you use the fireplace, let your child bring you the wood or tools; if you use candles, let the child check to make sure the candle holder fits snugly; and when you change or test the batteries in your smoke alarms,

ask the child to help you.

What to Do if You Suspect Your Student/Child Is Playing with Fire?

- Talk to the child about his or her actions. Explain again that fire is a tool for use only by adults, and that it is very dangerous for children.
- Many schools, fire departments and law enforcement agencies have programs for children who are inappropriately interested in fire or who have set fires.

Original URL:

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/kids/discuss/index.shtm>