

Facts about Children, Fires and Burns

- One of the most common causes of home fires is children playing with fire.
- Small children who play with fire often become the victims of their own fireplay.
- Each year, fire kills more children than any other home accident, and seriously injures many more.
- Many children who accidentally start house fires have died because they tried to "hide" from the fire they started. Make sure your children understand that if they are ever in a house fire, that they should get out of the house immediately.
- Many children receive severe burns by being scalded with hot water at bathing time. Lower the temperature of your water heater to 120 degrees to prevent your child from accidentally being scalded. Test the temperature of bathtub water before allowing your child to enter the bath, and remember that children have skin that is much more sensitive than adult skin.
- Smoke detectors are one of the most important life-saving devices of modern times. Be sure to have at least one smoke detector on every level of your home, and test them at least once a month to make sure they operate properly.



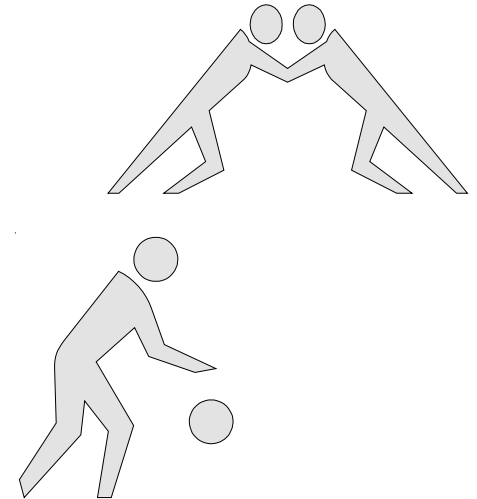
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
James E. McGreevey
Governor



DEPARTMENT
OF
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
Susan Bass Levin
Commissioner

*For more information about
fire safety, contact your local
Fire Department.*

Teaching your Energetic Child *about* Fire Safety

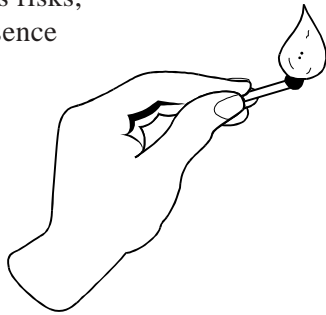


NEW JERSEY
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY
Lawrence Petrillo, Director

FIRE SAFETY STARTS AT HOME

As your children grow, their combination of natural curiosity about fire and boundless energy could lead them to conduct some experiments on their own and possibly take some dangerous risks, particularly in the absence of adult supervision.

As a parent, you can help minimize risks your children might take by eliminating situations which could be hazardous to children too young to understand basic safety concepts. As they develop to the point where they do become capable of understanding safety, you should set aside time to teach them about the potential dangers and consequences of fire.

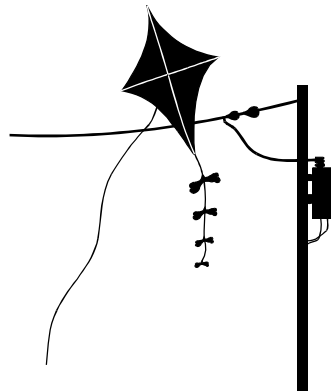


Children under the age of five make up only 7% of the American population, but account for 23% of the country's fire deaths.

■ **Provide your children with basic fire safety instruction.** Children usually do not understand what fire is capable of doing, or how quickly a fire can get out of control. At the youngest age possible, teach your children that matches and cigarette lighters are not toys to be played with, but tools to be used by adults only for acceptable purposes. Teach them about the legitimate uses of fire - for cooking, heating the home, barbecuing outdoors, etc. Teach them also about how fire can be harmful - but be sure to do it in a way that is appropriate for their level of understanding. When they are ready, teach them to bring any matches or lighters they find to an adult.

■ **Never assume your children won't do something dangerous.** Children have a natural sense of curiosity, but don't always understand the dangers associated with their actions.

■ **Help your children think through consequences.** Teach them what is safe and what is not safe. For example, explain exactly why it is unsafe for a child to play with matches in his or her home; how certain surfaces could be hot enough to cause a burn if they are touched; or how contact with electrical appliances or wiring could cause a severe shock.



■ **Be a safety inspector.** There are precautions you can take before your children start playing. Inspect the places where they play, and put restrictions on the places where children can go without adult supervision - particularly in the kitchen while food is cooking and in the bathroom when the tub is filling or filled with hot water. Inspect play areas not only for matches and lighters, but also for possible hazards from electrical outlets, electrical power cords and appliances, etc.



■ **Follow through.** If one of your children does get hurt while playing dangerously, treat the injury first, then review the actions that led to the injury. Discipline if necessary. Because the injury may already have helped the child learn the consequences of his or her actions, it may not be necessary to impose a severe penalty. If, however, your child was doing something dangerous and was not hurt, you should help him or her understand what could have happened because of careless behavior.

■ **Don't forget to praise.** Congratulate your children when they make the right decisions while playing. Positive encouragement helps build self-confidence. The more self-confidence your children have, the less likely they will be to fall prey to pressure from peers - now or in years to come.