

□ Teach match and lighter safety

Matches and lighters are tools for grown-ups NOT toys for children. If children find matches and lighters, young children (under the age of 7 years) should TELL a grown-up they know, and older children (7 years and older) should GIVE them to a grown-up they know. Older children should be taught the safe and responsible use of matches and lighters, under direct adult supervision. Children can be provided with an opportunity to light the fireplace, campfire or candles on a birthday cake. Always reward or praise children for demonstrating fire safe behaviour.

□ Set a good example. Children don't always hear what you say, but they certainly see what you do. Young children learn by exploring, experimenting and mimicking adult behavior. Model fire safe behavior in your home at all times.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT MYTHS & REALITIES OF FIRE?

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

FACT: While curiosity about fire is common, playing with fire and setting fires is not normal and can be deadly.

MYTH: Fire setting is a phase children will outgrow.

FACT: It is not a phase. You must deal with it immediately or it will continue and progress.

MYTH: If the fire is small there is no problem.

FACT: All fires start small. However, fires spread quickly and can easily get out of control, endangering lives and property.

MYTH: Children who start fires are pyromaniacs.

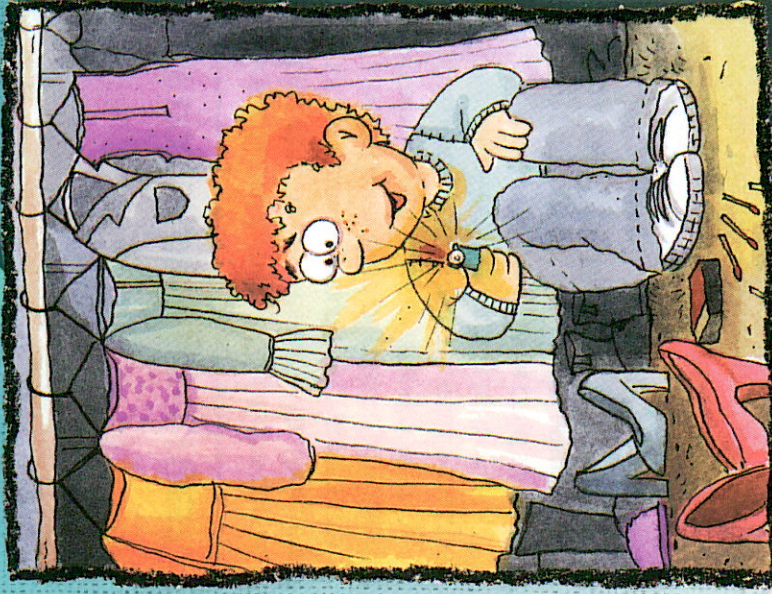
FACT: Almost every child has some curiosity about fire. But progression from mere interest in fire to fire setting is a problem. Occasionally fire setting can be a symptom of a more widespread problem.

WHEN SHOULD YOU SEEK HELP?

When fire setting goes beyond what you are able to deal with, help may be provided by your local fire department. Make the call today.



CHILDREN & FIRE WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?



Jointly Sponsored By:



Office of the
Fire Commissioner,
British Columbia

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Children Playing With Fire is a Deadly Game

CHILDREN & FIRE

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Each year in British Columbia fires set by children take a tremendous toll in property losses, personal injuries and death. Fire setting can begin at a very early age and continue into adulthood. By recognizing the problem early and taking corrective measures the risk of future fire setting incidents can be greatly reduced.

WHY DO CHILDREN LIGHT FIRES?

Most children express a natural and normal curiosity about fire in their early life. Their interest can be expressed in a number of appropriate ways: asking fire related questions, playing with fire related toys such as a fire engine and for older children, participating in adult supervised activities involving fire, such as lighting a barbeque or fireplace. When a child's interest and experimentation with fire are unsupervised, the potential for disaster exists.

Some children however, set fires deliberately. Reasons for this may include: peer pressure, boredom, anger, a cry for help, or a significant crisis such as a divorce or death of a family member. For these children, fire setting can become an outlet for their feelings, and may require intervention from the fire department or other community resource.

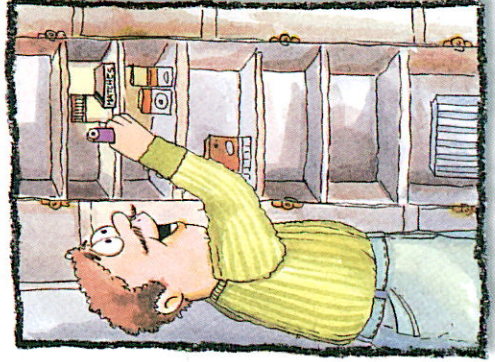


Closely supervise children around fire and always set a good example.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO PREVENT FIRE SETTING?

Supervise for safety

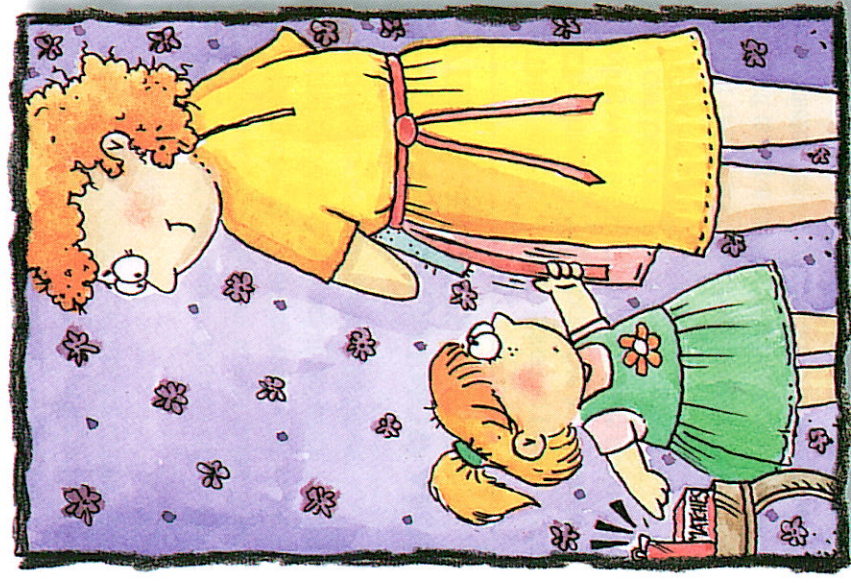
Provide appropriate and effective supervision for children. Supervision requires frequent visual contact so that children's activities can be monitored. Supervision also includes previewing what children are watching on television, videos and the internet. Restricting access to some internet sites is recommended.



Store matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children

Remove the temptation

Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children. Better yet, remove all unnecessary matches and lighters from your home. Most children are only involved with fire because it is available. Remember, child resistant lighters are not childproof, not even for a 2 year old.



Teach children match and lighter safety

Educate children about fire

Teach young children that fire is a tool used to heat our homes and cook our food - it is not a toy to be played with. Fire is not magic. It is hot and can cause devastating burns, deaths and property damage.