



JUVENILE FIRE-SETTER PREVENTION PROGRAM



CHILDREN AND FIRE DON'T MIX

THE LEHI FIRE DEPARTMENT JUVENILE FIRE-SETTER INTERVENTION PROGRAM HAS TAKEN A POSITIVE APPROACH IN ITS EFFORTS TO STOP YOUTH FIRE-SETTING. A GOAL TO STOP FIRE-SETTING IN OUR COMMUNITY BY JUVENILES HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. THIS GOAL SHALL BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH INVESTIGATION, IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, EDUCATION, AND APPROPRIATE REFERRAL TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

MISSION STATEMENT

Lehi Fire Department Juvenile Fire-Setter Program is dedicated to providing the highest quality in fire education, awareness and rehabilitative services to the community and is committed to reducing injury, death, and loss of property due to misuse of fire by juveniles. We will accomplish this through networking support agencies, counseling, education, and enforcing practices that will rehabilitate offenders and educate family, friends and the public.

WHAT IS FIRE-SETTING?

We call children fire setters when they have begun to use fire in a way that is dangerous or not approved by a parent. The term fire setter does not mean a child has a problem. The majority of children should be gaining all the information they need to be safe with fire at home and in school. These are areas you can help control.

FIRE-SETTING MYTHS

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

Fact: While curiosity about fire is common, use without a parent's approval or knowledge is dangerous to the child and anyone around them.

Myth: *If you burn a child's hand, they will stop.*

Fact: Burns only create fear and scars. The reason behind fire use must be discovered and addressed.

Myth: *Fire-setting is a phase and the child will grow out of it.*

Fact: It is not a phase. It is a dangerous behavior. You cannot afford to wait for fire behavior to change. It only takes one match to cause serious injury or death.

Myth: *Some children are obsessed with fire.*

Fact: In reality, very few children are obsessed or would be considered pyromaniacs. There is almost always a reason behind the behavior.



WHAT MOTIVATES FIRE-SETTING?

By determining the motivation for fire-setting, we can best determine how to deal with it. Most children fall into the following classifications:

Curiosity:

- The child is usually young.
- The child usually lights paper or other valueless objects on fire.
- The child is secretive and fear the consequences of his/her actions.
- The child may have ready access to matches and lighters at home.
- The child may not fully understand parents rules regarding fire use.
- Parents may be setting a bad example for children as they use matches and lighters for everyday tasks.

Treatment: Fire Safety Education

Troubled:

- The child may be any age.
- There may be no apparent reason for the fire-setting behavior.
- Fire-setting may occur during times of personal or family stress.
- Fire-setting may accompany other acting out behaviors.
- The child may be experiencing problems in school or with friends.
- Fire-setting is often meant to destroy clothes, toys, or other items of personal property that belong to them or others.

Treatment: Family Fire Safety Education and/or Counseling Assistance.

Delinquent:

- Usually older children and adolescents.
- Fire-setting is usually associated with other rebellious behavior and may occur with other acts of vandalism.
- There may be other children involved.
- Children show little or no regard for others around them.
- Fire-setting behavior is often accompanied by anger, depression, or other unresolved feelings the child may have.

Treatment: Family Fire Safety Education and Counseling Assistance

FIRE-SETTING PREVENTION

A parent can do a lot to prevent children from being involved with fire. Children look to parents for guidance, leadership, and as a role model. Listed below are some tips to help you deal with fire-setting behaviors you might encounter.

1. Lead by example. You cannot expect your child to treat fire any differently than you do.
2. Explain why they cannot use fire. Simply saying DON'T is not good enough. Think about how you react when you are told that.
3. Treat matches and lighters like tools. Give these items the same respect you would other dangerous tools around your home (for example: knives, kitchen appliances, hammers, etc.).
4. Keep matches and lighters out of reach of all children. Better yet, remove all unnecessary matches and lighters from your home completely. Most children are only involved with fire because it is available.
5. Reward children for making right decisions with matches and lighters. Also, make clear the punishment for the wrong use of matches and lighters.
6. Encourage your child's school to promote fire safety in the classroom.

Remember: If you are uncomfortable with your ability to deal with your child's fire-setting behavior, Lehi Fire Department has a program that can assist.



When fire-setting goes beyond what you are able to deal with, call or bring your child to:

LEHI CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Office of the Fire Marshal

176 North Center Street

Lehi, Utah 84043

385-201-1081

Do not put off dealing with this behavior. Fire is a devastating and deadly force.

Fire safety starts at home.
Your Safety is your responsibility.

www.lehi-ut.gov/departments/fire | www.facebook.com/LehiFire