

# Fire Safety Smart

Teaching young children about fire safety can be challenging. Many children think fire is fun and easy to control. This misconception is probably due



to a child's first experiences with fire: candles on a birthday cake or a campfire at a family outing. Young children do not understand that a tiny flame is capable of becoming an uncontrollable blaze. They are incapable of understanding the consequences of playing with fire and how it could lead to losing their home or even a loved one.

## Tips for a "Fire Safe"

### Environment

- Make sure smoke detector/alarm system is in working order by testing it monthly.
- It is important that smoke detectors/alarms are installed in the right places. Ask your local fire department for help.
- Locate two escape routes from each room. Diagram and post these directions in each room.
- Plan for a designated meeting area out of the building in a safe location.
- Fire extinguishers should be readily available. Make sure their usage date has not expired. All staff should know how to use them.
- Practice and document fire drills on a monthly basis.
- Prohibit staff from bringing matches or lighters to the facility.
- Keep all flammable products such as gas, kerosene and motor oil out of the child care environment.
- Make sure blankets, curtains and other fabrics are flame retardant.
- Know where the gas "shut off" valve is located.



## Talking to Young Children

- Teach the children to know the sound of the alarms and to get out of the building immediately.
- Encourage children to follow directions and stay calm during fire drills.
- Reinforce that matches and lighters should never be touched by children.
- Stress the importance of telling an adult immediately if lighters or matches are found.
- Teach that hot things can hurt you.
- Teach "Stop, Drop and Roll" or "Stop, Lock and Roll" (for children in wheelchairs).
- Invite a firefighter to talk with the children and to show them what a fire fighter in full gear looks like.



## Talking Points for Parents

- Discuss the fire safety precautions that are being taken to ensure their child's safety.
- Explain the importance of performing similar activities at home such as doing regular fire drills, checking smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Ask families about their escape plans and safe meeting place.
- Remind children to never touch candles, matches, or lighters.

## Resources:

<http://www.firesafety.gov/>

ICCHCP Policy Templates:

[www.iidc.indiana.edu/ecc/res-health.htm](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/ecc/res-health.htm)

Information consistent with Caring for Our Children 2002: [www.nrc.uchsc.edu](http://www.nrc.uchsc.edu)

