



## Coffee Break Training - Fire Prevention and Public Education

### Education as an Intervention Strategy in a Youth Firesetting Intervention Program

No. FM-2014-10 December 11, 2014

**Learning Objective:** The student will be able to identify the goal of fire safety education in a youth firesetting intervention program.

The majority of cases identified by a youth firesetting intervention program will be classified as “some risk.” Curiosity or experimentation is the prime motive for firesetting as defined in the “some risk” category. “Definite or extreme risk” firesetting situations also require educational intervention. However, sometimes the education will follow a referral for other types of interventions, such as clinical support or juvenile justice.

The goal of fire safety education in a youth firesetting intervention program is to give children and adolescents information to make the right decisions so that future firesetting incidents do not occur.

Educating the child and parents or caregivers is essential for the success of a youth firesetting intervention program. Youth firesetting intervention specialists must not assume that all children, adolescents, and parents or caregivers know the basics about fire safety and fire science. All three groups can be educated to make good decisions through structured, age-appropriate classes.

Remember to consider the four common factors that influence firesetting behavior:

- Easy access to ignition materials.
- Lack of adequate supervision.
- Lack of fire safety practice in the home.
- Easy access to information on firesetting and explosives construction on the Internet.

Messages, methods and materials should be broad-based, without bias, educationally sound and age-appropriate. Considerations need to be given to the age and developmental level of the youth, the ability of the parents or caregivers to understand the educational intervention, and the language spoken and understood by the youth and family.

Setting fires oftentimes indicates that youths are seeking attention. You can make a difference by providing appropriate education about fire science, safety, and the consequences of firesetting behavior to youths and their families so that future firesetting incidents do not occur.

Learn more about youth firesetting prevention and intervention by taking a six-day resident course or by taking two-day courses offered across the country. More information can be found at <http://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/search>.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency. “Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention,” January 2014.

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