



# Curious Kids Set Fires



Everyday people experience the tragedy of fire. But did you know that each year about 450 people are killed and \$300 million in property is destroyed in fires attributed to children playing with fire. It's never too early to start teaching kids about the dangers of fireplay. Children under the age of five are curious about fire. Often what begins as a natural curiosity can lead to disaster. Here are a few more facts about children and fires:

- \* Kids set over 100,000 fires every year.
- \* Children make up between 20% - 25% of all fire deaths.
- \* About 40% of all fires that kill children are set by children playing with fire.

So what can you do to prevent this from happening in your home?

Begin by supervising young children closely. At home, children usually play with fire in bedrooms, closets, and under beds. These are "secret" places where there are a lot of things that catch on fire easily.

Keep matches and lighters in a secure drawer or cabinet. Even if they are child safety equipped. Have your children tell you when they find matches or lighters.

Teaching children about fire is the most important thing you can do. Show them that fire is a tool, not a toy. Teach them the nature of fire, that it is fast, hot, and deadly.

Finally have a family fire escape plan. Teach kids not to hide from firefighters but to get out quickly and call for help from somewhere nearby. Practice your escape routes regularly along with how to crawl close to the floor, under the smoke and how to stop, drop and roll. Familiarize them with the sound of the smoke detector and what to do when they hear it.

If you think that your child may be playing with fire, sit down and talk with him or her. If you think that there may be a serious problem, contact your local fire department for help and information.