

WHO CAN HELP?

If your child has experimented with fire, sign him or her up for THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROGRAM. This program provides staff for pre-academy interviews with the child involved in firesetting and his/her family. A fire safety academy completed in three sessions is also provided. As part of the academy, children will learn the fundamentals of fire safety: such as stop, drop and roll, making a fire drill plan for the home, learning what the law requires children to do in case of fire, and what actions cause fire. Placement for families who need counseling services is also part of the program.



Photo by B. Pinger 1999

**Serving children inappropriately using fire:
The Sacramento Valley
Juvenile Firesetter Program**

Sponsored by Our Partners:

CA. Dept. Forestry and Fire Protect. NYP
Cameron Park Counseling Service
Dixon Fire Department
Firefighters Burn Institute
Folsom Fire Department
Galt Fire Protection District
Placer County Probation Department
Rocklin Fire Department
Roseville Fire Department
Sacramento County Probation Department
Sacramento Fire Department
Sac Metro Fire Department
South Placer Fire District
UC Davis Regional Burn Center



Help us to help children in need

**Sponsored by a partnership
of public and private agencies**

Sacramento Valley Juvenile Firesetter Program



**STOP CHILDREN
from
SETTING FIRES**



**CALL TOLL-FREE
1-888-452-SAFE or
www.firesetter.com**



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Sacramento Valley Juvenile Firesetter Program

THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROGRAM (SVJFP) provides a coordinated effort in helping juvenile firesetters and their families receive the help they need through education, assessment, and psychological services.



THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROGRAM is comprised of a consortium of fire, burn, and health-care personnel. Together these agencies provide assessment interviews to determine the problem level and referral to the Fire Safety Academy for education or, where necessary, to counseling services for psychological assessment and referral for treatment with a mental health professional.

The SVJFP Fire Safety Academy provides many educational tools as well as presents guest speakers from the following departments and agencies:

- Probation
- UC Davis Burn Center/Survivors
- Mental Health

The Academy is broken into age appropriate classes for the juveniles, while the parents are attending informational training seminars. The academy is offered five times a year.

The SVJFP has organized a multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment team which coordinates the delivery of mental health services to identified juvenile firesetters and their families throughout the greater Sacramento area. Both on site assessment as well as individual, family and group therapy are available through our mental health resources. In many instances juveniles and their families are covered for this assessment and treatment under their insurance company's mental health benefits.

THE PROBLEM: FIRES & FIREPLAY

Firesetting behavior is a growing problem in the United States with over 1 million fires set each year by children. These children range in age from toddlers through late adolescents and come from all socioeconomic groups, all cultures, and all family structures. One in seven deaths, due to arson, is set by a child under 15 years of age. This growing problem requires community action through the coordination among fire agencies, schools, burn centers, juvenile justice, and mental health services.

WHO SETS FIRES, AND WHY?

Nationwide, children are responsible for 54 percent of all arson fires. 60 percent of the children who set fires are considered curious with a natural desire to experiment. These are usually younger children who act without thought to the danger involved. Some children may act out of boredom, looking for something to do. Some of these children may have other problems such as Attention Deficit



Hyperactive Disorder, which would contribute to impulsive behavior.

The remaining 40 percent of children are often older, usually males who have other problems of a psychological nature sometimes as a result of family, school, or social difficulties. Some of these children or adolescents have intense feelings of powerlessness and anger that can lead to firesetting.

HOW TO PREVENT FIRESETTING

Younger children: Children 5 years old and under when involved in firesetting almost always do so due to curiosity. Teach young children that a match is a tool and not a toy. Keep matches, lighters, and heat producing appliances out of the reach of children. Teach young children to tell an adult if they find matches or a lighter. Reward them for doing so.

Older children: Children 6 to 12 years old when involved in firesetting may be curious about fire or may have serious problems resulting in firesetting. Set the example for fire safety: Have your children watch the way you cook (i.e. turning pot handles away from reach), the way you light a fire or candles, and the care you show in teaching them that these tasks must be performed only by adults or children under adult supervision.

Take the time to teach your children about the potential destruction of fire. (It only takes minutes for a whole house to burn down and only seconds to have severe, permanent, physical damage as a result of burns.)

Adolescents: Children 13 to 17 years of age rarely set fires due to curiosity. Teach and model for your adolescent conflict and stress management skills. Be available for regular communication. Involve your adolescent in decisions that affect her or him. Provide your adolescent with healthy activities (i.e. church, youth group, or sports). Encourage positive relationships with peers and adults.

