

## Meeting Curiosity With A Positive Approach -- A 3-Step Plan --



### STEP ONE: TEACH YOUR CHILD ABOUT FIRE

“What is fire?” Fire is a strong natural force, like wind, water or electrical power, which produces heat. Like all energy sources, fire is a tool we use in our everyday lives: cooking food, heating homes, powering cars, and lighting candles are just a few examples of ways we use fire as a tool.

Fire can be extremely dangerous, because the heat it produces can quickly get out of control if not handled properly. Because of this danger to people and property, adults should only use fire. Even adults must carefully follow special safety rules whenever they use fire.

Fire is useful, but it is not magic. It is powerful, but it is practical when used wisely. Its fascinating process, but its also a part of everyday life. It is not a toy, and young children should never be allowed to use it like one. This is the lesson you should teach your child about fire.

### STEP TWO: CONTROL YOUR CHILD'S ACCESS TO FIRE

“What are these for?”

- Matches and lighters are the tools we use to make fires. Only adults must handle them. They can start fires and so even adults must follow safety rules whenever they use matches or lighters.

“Can I play with them?”

- We all know about curiosity and the cat...keep matches and lighters up and out of the reach of curious young children.

“I want to help!”

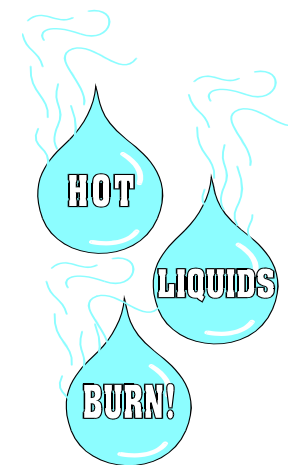
- Assign a curious child the job of telling you whenever they see carelessly discarded matches or lighters.
- Older children can be allowed to bring these items to adults for proper storage.

“I want to do that...”

- Whenever you use fire, let your curious child help you to make it safe
- Let him get the pot holders and pan lids and check to make certain nothing is too close to the gas flame.
- Let her get the newspaper for the woodstove or fireplace; let her hold a water-filled saucer to douse the spent matches.
- Let him make certain nothing is blocking heating vents.
- Let her check the base or holder before you light a candle.

What if no one's watching?”

- Never leave cooking fires unattended.
- Always make certain an adult is watching the fireplace or woodstove.
- **MAKE CERTAIN ALL RELATIVES AND GUESTS FOLLOW YOUR RULES FOR MATCHES AND LIGHTERS.**



### STEP THREE: SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

Children learn by watching and imitating adults. Make sure your children have a good example to follow. Let your child learn from you the importance of following safety rules whenever fire is used. Take advantage of these times to emphasize the precautions you use.

**Cooking:** You can make safety a part of every recipe by wearing tight-fitting sleeves, using pot holders and pan lids, turning pan handles in, keeping the stove area clean of easily combustible materials.

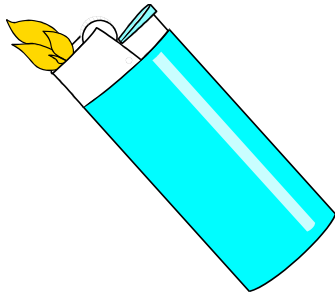
**Heating:** Have your heating system cleaned and inspected and keep all vents clear, store flammable liquids far away from a furnace, use a screen for your fireplace and make sure your woodstove is properly installed and vented.

**Smoking:** Keep matches and lighters above the strike zone, use safe ashtrays, carefully dispose of ashes, never allow children to light cigarettes or pipes, never “play tricks” with a lighter or matches.

Never let anyone use matches or lighters in an unsafe way in front of your child. Make certain all adults follow this rule in your home.

## How do I know that my child is curious about fire?

He may ask you questions, or he may stare at the fire, or point to or try to touch matches and lighters, or he may run to the window when fire trucks race by. But why wait for signs? Whenever you use fire, teach your child about it.



## “What if my child has already begun experimenting with fire?”

Calmly, but firmly, explain that this is not an acceptable way to learn about fire. Explain—but do not overemphasize—the seriousness and danger of playing with fire and immediately begin teaching your child about the safe way to learn about fire.

## “Someone said that if I burn his fingertips he’d learn the dangers..”

This is simply incorrect. It’s also child abuse. Burning your child will only injure him. It will not teach him anything positive about fire. It may even give him the dangerous idea to use fire in anger. Instead, try the 3-step plan outlined in this brochure.

## FAMILY FIRESAFETY IDEAS

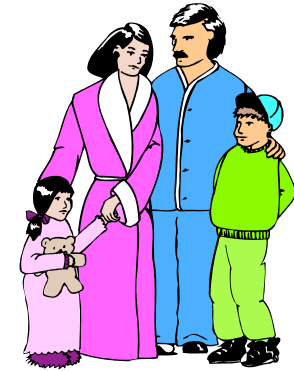
- Install smoke detectors, check the batteries every month, and vacuum them regularly to keep them working.
- Plan and practice a home fire escape plan, chose a meeting place outside your home.
- Learn how to get emergency help in your community, and teach your children how to call for help.
- Have regular home fire inspections. Contact your local fire department to learn about how you can rid your home of common fire hazards.
- Keep your hot water heater at 120 or below to prevent scalds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## Teaching Your Child About Fire (Without getting burned)



Curiosity is a vital part of a healthy childhood. Children are naturally very curious about fire. When children are curious about something, they often “play” with it in order to learn about it. Last year, thousands of children “played” with matches. Only, they didn’t learn anything. They died.

Fire is the leading cause of death in the home for young children in the U.S. Tragically, one third of the children who died in home fires last year actually set the fires that killed them. Burns are also a major cause of accidental death for young children in our country, many of who are burned when playing with matches or lighters.

What’s most tragic about these deaths is that almost all of them could have been prevented. How? By teaching fire safety in the home. This brochure can help you teach your children about fire so that they, and you, don’t get burned.