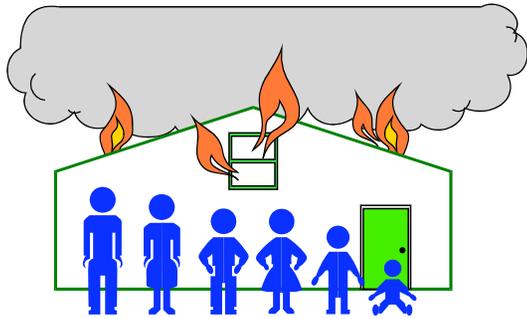


“It’s As If He Were Making A Cry For Help...”

Children and fire...a dangerous combination. Tragically, it’s just such a combination that is responsible for an increasing number of fires. Fire is the leading cause of death in the home for young children in this country, and a third of the children who died in home fires last year **started** the fires that killed them.



Many cases of juvenile firesetting begin with a child’s curiosity about the world. Fire is one of the most fascinating and powerful elements of a child’s world. When there is too much stress in a child’s world, he or she may be drawn to fire for reasons beyond curiosity. A child, who feels helpless or unable to cope with a crisis, can be attracted to the power of fire. This child will start fires as a way of expressing this fear, confusion, or anger. We call this behavior “crisis firesetting.”

Get the Right Kind of Help

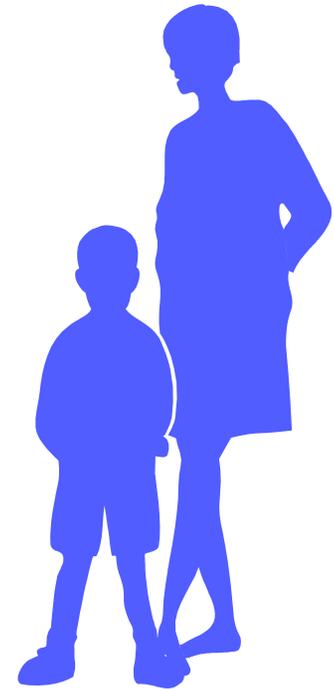
Firesetting is often a complex behavior. Children who tend to act out their fears and anger often have genuine difficulty talking about themselves and their feelings. For this reason, traditional “tell-me-how-you-feel” therapy usually won’t work. There are specialized programs available, which combine fire education with innovative therapies. The Sacramento Valley Juvenile Firesetter Program can help you locate these services in your area.

Where To Go For Help

**SACRAMENTO VALLEY
JUVENILE FIRESETTER
PROGRAM
3101 STOCKTON BLVD
SACRAMENTO, CA 95820
1-888-452-SAFE**



What Every Parent Should Know About

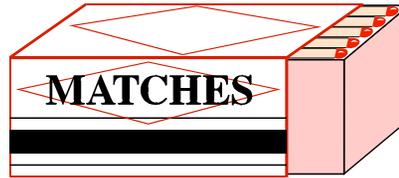


JUVENILE FIRE BEHAVIOR

FIRE BEHAVIOR

Fire behavior is a naturally occurring developmental stage in children. It emerges in most children around the age of three.

There are three distinct levels: Fire Interest, Firestarting, and Firesetting.



FIRE INTEREST

- Children express their interest in a number of ways.
- A question such as how hot a fire is or what makes a fire burn.
- They may wear fire hats, play with toy fire trucks, and cook food on their toy stoves.

This type of play is healthy and provides children with ways to explore and understand fire as a productive and useful part of their lives. It also represents the first signal to parents that it is time to educate their children about fire.

FIRESTARTING

- Most are young boys between the ages of three and nine.
- Firestarts are unplanned single episodes motivated by curiosity or experimentation.
- Resulting fires may be accidental.
- Available matches or lighters are used and there is no specific material or target ignited with the intention to destroy or harm.
- Attempts are made to extinguish the fire or call for help.
- Feelings of guilt or remorse occur after the incident.

FIRESETTING

- Firesetting consists of a series of planned firestarts that take place over several weeks, months, or even years.
- These fires can be motivated by a number of different reasons including anger, revenge, attention seeking, malicious mischief, crime concealment, and intention to destroy or harm property and/or people.
- Once the fire is started, the firesetter will rarely make an attempt to extinguish it.
- He may run away to a safe spot, often to watch the fire burn, and possibly return later to view the destruction.

Firestarting and Firesetting

Factor	Firestarting	Firesetting
History	Single episode	Repeated
Method	Unplanned	Planned
Motive	Curious	Conscious
Intent	Accidental	Purposeful
Ignition		
Source	Available	Collected
Materials	At-hand	Flammable
Target	Nonspecific	Specific
Behavior	Extinguish fire	Run away

FOUR FIRESETTING BEHAVIORS-TYPICAL PROFILES

Curiosity: Males, 3-7, with poor impulse control or hyperactivity, who are very curious and learn by doing, intend no harm or damage, and may seek help or try to extinguish fire.

Crisis: Males, 5-15, often intends damage. The object of the fire may be symbolic, related to family stressors. Child may have psychiatric symptoms, history of impulsive or aggressive behavior, poor self-esteem and poor coping skills.

Delinquent: Males or females, 10-16, who set fires in conjunction with their peers, usually in a “crisis profile” for years, may want to harm others or destroy property. Experimentation with accelerants is likely, as is a history of defying authority, possible gang involvement, cruel behavior without remorse, and a refusal to take responsibility for actions.

Pathological: Males, 12 – adulthood, who collect fire tools and have a repetitive firesetting pattern, are destructive of their own and others’ property, have poor peer and inter-personal skills, perform poorly in school, have a history of aggressive behavior, tend to blame others, and have a chaotic family life. May include psychiatric illness, history of physical or sexual abuse, and low self-esteem masked by narcissism.

