



Kid check: protecting children from fire

It is normal for children, even as young as two years old, to be curious about fire. Guiding children to fire-safe behavior is the responsibility of parents and caregivers.

Fire play happens when a child, curious and unsupervised, plays with matches, a lighter, an open flame or a hot stove. This curiosity can lead to a fire that may result in death, injury and property damage.

Fires started by children in the home usually happen in a bedroom, followed by the living room, closet and kitchen. If your child or a child you know is curious about fire, there are three steps to prevent a fire tragedy:

Step 1: Prevent children from starting fires

- Keep matches and lighters out of sight and reach. Even toddlers are known to have started fires with lighters.
- Never leave a hot stove, space heater or lit candle unattended.
- Reward the child for bringing any matches or lighters they find to an adult.
- Never leave children unsupervised at home - not even to run a quick errand.

Step 2: Teach children about fire

- Teach children that fire is not a toy; it is a tool we use to cook food and heat our homes.
- Educate your kids about the dangers of fire and make sure they know that all fires, even small ones, can spread very quickly.
- Provide opportunities for school-aged children to understand the safe use of fire, such as lighting birthday candles, under your supervision.
- Teach your child how to say no when friends suggest playing with fire.

Step 3: Set a good example

- Emphasize the fire and burn safety rules you follow when using fire.
- With your children, regularly inspect your home for fire hazards.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms.
- Plan and practice home fire escape drills.