

Caring and Sharing

A publication of the Child Care Resource & Referral Agency
East Central University

Fall '10 Edition

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Center for Early Childhood Professional Development

1-888-446-7608 www.cecpcd.org

Warmline — 1-888-574-5437

free telephone consultation on child development, health related issues or challenging behaviors.

Scholars for Excellence —

Gina McPherson 1-866-343-3881

www.okhighered.org/secc

Murray State—Heather McLean

580-371-2371, 234

Seminole State—Carol Parker

405-382-9700

Reaching for the Stars —

Marchell Newton 1-800-884-1534 or

Misti Denton 1-800-909-7491

October is Fire Prevention Month

And Children are Fascinated with FIRE

When most people hear the phrase “juvenile firesetter,” they picture a troubled adolescent. But that’s not the case at all. One in four fires are set by children under the age of five.

Is there something terribly wrong with these children? No, not at all. They are normal, curious children who mean no harm. They set fires not out of malice but because fire is fascinating, and because they don’t understand the consequences.

Yet the fires set by young children can have tragic results. Almost 80% of the fires started by preschool children caused some amount of structural damage — more than twice the rate of structural damage in the fires started by children five and older. The chance of injury resulting from a fire started by a child under five is three times the chance of injury in a fire started by an older child. And the chance of death in a fire started by a preschool child is 27 times the chance of death from a fire started by a child five or older.

Why? Young children start fires almost exclusively in the home, which increases the likelihood of both property damage and injury. In fact, children are most likely to start a fire in their own bedrooms — where they spend much of their free time, feel comfortable, where parents assume they are safe, and where a fire may remain undetected by adults for some time.

Why do Children Set Fires?

Children’s beliefs about fire are based on their own experience, not what adults tell them. Kids think:

Fire is familiar. Fire is an integral part of many carefree and enjoyable activities, from the candles on birthday cakes to family campouts. Kids see fire being used at the dinner table, on the stove, at picnics, and in religious ceremonies. They associate it with food, comfort, and fun. Fire is fascinating — a responsive toy.

Fire is fragile. Birthday candles are often blown out with a single breath. Camping trips spent trying to start a fire with wet wood, barbecues with old charcoal, lighting matches in the wind, and uncooperative fireplaces leave children with the impression that fires are hard to start and easy to stop.

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Fire Prevention (continued from Page 1)

"I Can Handle This." Familiarity with fire, from the kinds of common activities described above, gives children an exaggerated sense of control over fire. Every candle or match a child lights and extinguishes, and every experience of fireplay without consequences, reinforces this belief.

Children don't understand that a tiny flame can become a fire that burns down a whole house. Preschool children may understand simple cause and effect, but not more complex consequences. They cannot imagine the chain of events that lead from a single match to a raging house fire. Kids often don't even know what items normally found in their home will burn, such as drapes and wallpaper. Many adults don't even know how rapidly fire can spread.

Teaching Fire Safety

With preschoolers, it's best to stick to the basics. Start with two simple rules aimed at preventing children from setting a fire:

"Matches and lighters are adult tools." We have found it effective to connect matches and lighters to other adult tools. Even very young children usually understand what tools are. If you ask children what power tools their parents use at home, they're always eager to list them. They're usually quick to admit that adult tools, especially potentially dangerous ones like power tools, are not for children. Emphasize that matches and lighters are also adult tools, and just as dangerous as power tools.

"Go tell a grown-up" Teaching children that matches and lighters are for adults only isn't enough. Teach them to go and tell a grown-up if they find such tools lying around, no matter where. Emphasize that they should not pick up these tools and bring them to an adult (you wouldn't want them to pick up and carry a circular saw, after all), but should tell an adult who will put them away safely. "Tell a grown-up" is effective because it gives children something they can do, not just something they can't. Children love knowing they "have a job" to do to help keep their families safe. They also love telling their parents something when they know they're right! This positive reinforcement gets children to cooperate with fire safety rules.

If a Fire Does Occur, Teach Children

To Get Out Quickly — It is important not to hide and to get out and stay out. They must understand not to come back into the house for a favorite toy or pet. Their family should also have a designated meeting place outside of the house.

Crawl Low Under Smoke — Practice in the classroom crawling low under smoke. Help children understand that smoke rises and they need to stay low to the ground to see and breathe.

Stop! Drop! And Roll! — If a child does get fire on their clothes. Be sure to use the words "if fire gets on your clothes" and not, "if you catch on fire." Those words can be too frightening. Again, have the children practice covering their faces, and dropping to the ground to roll around to put out fire.

Go to the Firefighter — Often children are scared of how a firefighter looks in all their gear and children will run and hide. Invite a local firefighter to come to your classroom in his regular uniform and then put on their gear. Help children see that it is the same person and they should not be afraid if they see someone dressed like that at a fire.

Excerpts from FireProof Children. For more information visit www.fireproofchildren.com

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Fall 2010 Training Schedule

Tic-Toc CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Saturday, October 23, 2010

Wewoka Chamber of Commerce 9:00-4:00 p.m.

This training focuses on working with children who have challenging behaviors. Areas discussed include: assessment of the environment, determining key issues which influence the child's behavior, and intervention strategies.

Cost is \$10 per person

Tic-Toc INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Saturday, December 4th, 2010

Ada, East Central University 9:00-4:00 p.m.

This training focuses on basic information for child care staff about how to work with children with disabilities and their families, including understanding common disabilities, how to plan for a child with a disability and statewide and community resources.

Cost is \$10 per person

Register for either of these classes by calling

Judith Grove at 405-271-2131, ext. 47130 or by email at tic-toc@ouhsc.edu

Para Clases en Espanol llame a 1-405-942-4179

Courses available Online:

Shared Reading

Learn how to expand shared reading throughout preschool classroom discovery centers and actively participate in shared reading through big books, large group, and small group sessions. Participants will learn how to develop a well-planned shared reading activity and analyze its effectiveness. This class is 4 hours and qualifies for Tier II training.

You will receive .4 CEU's. **The fee is \$15.00.** Go to www.cecpdonline.org to enroll.

Alphabet Knowledge

Participants will develop a greater understanding of alphabet knowledge within a broader framework of literacy activities. Examine four strategies that support children in learning the alphabet as well as how to integrate the alphabet into classroom discovery centers. This class is 4 hours and qualifies for Tier II training. You will receive .4 CEU's. **The fee is \$15.00.**

Go to www.cecpdonline.org to enroll.

Learning to Read Through the Environment

Teachers will develop a greater understanding of the conventions of print and shared writing. Participants will discover the elements of a print-rich environment, and learn how to incorporate environmental print into classrooms by planning specific activities that make use of the print that children are exposed to daily. This class is 4 hours and qualifies for Tier II training.

You will receive .4 CEU's. **The fee is \$15.00.** Go to www.cecpdonline.org to enroll.

For Other Courses Available from the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development, go to www.cecpd.org

SAVE The DATE!

Ada Area Early Childhood Association Conference

February 26, 2011