

## *Emergency, Community, Health and Outreach*

### **ECHO TV Program “Fire: Anything But Child’s Play”**

**Questions & Answers, Final | May 23, 2013**

- 1. This is a program about children who intentionally set fires. How big a problem is this?**
  - Children die every year from fires they start.
  - One, small, fire can destroy your home or business and cause severe injury or loss of life.
  - The misuse of fire can be a crime – called arson.
  - By the time a child gets caught misusing fire, they may have already set many fires.
- 2. Isn’t “playing” with fire a normal part of growing up?**
  - Curiosity is normal, setting fires is not.
  - Children need to learn about fire, but learning about fire on their own, is dangerous.
  - Television and movies give a false impression of fire’s power, and human’s ability to control fire.
  - Fire is not a toy.
- 3. What are some of the reasons why children and teens misuse fire?**
  - Curiosity and fascination.
  - Imitating adult behavior, seen in person or from TV.
  - Trying to impress friends or seeking thrills.
  - Trying to express anger, fear or sadness.
  - Emotional situations at home, school or in relationships.

## *Emergency, Community, Health and Outreach*

### **4. How does fire play a role in our culture?**

- Holiday use: July 4<sup>th</sup> (Independence day) or New Year
- Faith-based use: Christmas candles (or other religious)
- Ritual use: Weddings, funerals, graveyard, incense burning (Somali), or Hoopli (Hmong) and money paper
- Social use: Birthday candles, campfires, and bonfires
- *We will not bring fire harm to our families by finding help to teach our children the proper use of fire.*
- *Our challenge is to teach that there is no shame in sharing the mistaken use of fire. This is how we teach proper use of fire*

### **5. How can we teach the proper use of fire in these situations?**

- Prevent fires before they start.
  - Keep fire tools locked up
  - Childproof lighters are not foolproof (perfect)!
  - Teach children about the dangers of fire tools (lighters) and flammable products (gasoline, cooking oil, etc.)
  - Seek professionals to show children the right and wrong uses for fire (fire department is best resource)
  - Adults should always be near fire when they are being used for celebrations. This helps keep the children safe.
- Most adults don't have solid understanding of fire behavior, fire safety, fire extinguishing. Talk to experts at the fire department.

## *Emergency, Community, Health and Outreach*

### **6. What are the signs that a child might be misusing fire?**

- Smell of fire, smoke or fuel.
- Burn marks on floors or walls, burns on child's hands.
- Burnt matches where adults didn't leave them.
- Char marks on clothing and objects.
- Children showing an *extreme interest in fire*.
- Desire to cause damage or harm to others is serious warning sign.

### **7. What can parents can do to help children who misuse fire?**

- Best thing to do is ask for help by calling the fire department or fire-setting interventionists.
- In Minnesota, there is a toll free line you can call and when you do, leave a message.
- If you speak a language other than English, ask for an interpreter and one will be made available in your language.
- Worst thing to do is to keep it a secret. There is no shame in asking for help and you won't bring harm to yourself for getting help.
- [DIRECTOR CUE: 1-800-500-8897]

### **8. What's involved in youth firesetting intervention?**

- Goal of fire-setting intervention is to educate the child, teen and adults so they learn to prevent future problems with fire.
- Parents play a part in the training and intervention.
- Some children may benefit by taking a class, and others learn better in a one-on-one situation. Both kinds of help are available.
- Sometimes children may need mental health or family therapy.

## *Emergency, Community, Health and Outreach*

### **9. What is “arson”? What makes it a crime?**

- If a fire was started on purpose, any damage to property or people is considered a crime called arson.
- If someone dies in an arson fire, it’s murder.
- In Minnesota, any fire that the fire department is called to is investigated to see if the fire was intentional/arson.
- The penalties for arson crimes are currently geared to punish adults however, a court judge could decide what kind of help and or penalties to give children who intentionally set fires.

### **10. Why do modern materials burn so much faster?**

- Synthetic fabrics and plastic products are cheap and lightweight, but burn very fast.
- These chemicals are also very toxic when burned. The smoke can be harmful to your health.
- Six years ago, a fire could double in size in 30 seconds. It’s now 19 seconds, and getting faster.
- [DIRECTOR ROLL-IN: ##Comparison Fire##]

### **11. ECHO HOSTS, IF TIME REVIEW:**

- Best thing to do is ask for help by calling the fire department or fire-setting interventionists.
- In Minnesota, you can call toll free 1-800-500-8897 and talk to someone in your own language about fire safety and fire setting.
- 9 out of 10 children who get help from professionals, do not continue improper use of fire.
- Most people don’t realize how fast fire can destroy property or harm people. Talk to experts at the fire department.
- [DIRECTOR CUE: 1-800-500-8897]