

## FIRE-SETTERS: WHO & WHY

### Curiosity Fire-setter

A curious fire-setter is likely an active child who is a hands-on (tactile) learner. The youth may try to experiment with matches and lighters, but is rarely aware of fire's destructive nature.

### Crisis Fire-setter

Lacking the appropriate coping or problem-solving skills, the crisis fire-setter may set fires to act out their anger or as a cry for help, perhaps even wanting to be caught.

### Thrill-seeking Fire-setter

A risk-taking youth who sets fires, often under peer influence. Enjoys attention-getting behavior that may copy video games or Internet videos.

### Purposeful Fire-setter

The youth is old enough to know the danger of fire, and may even have the intent to injure or kill. Fires set at this stage are often considered a criminal act, so the youth may already be in the juvenile justice system, but overall still regards such consequences as a joke.

### Repetitive Fire-setter

Most likely has a high IQ but suffers from academic and behavioral problems, and possibly a history of medical and or/psychological disorders. Oftentimes this fire-setter has been victim of physical/sexual abuse, and is typically a loner with a life-long fascination with fire. (\* immediate mental health intervention indicated)

## Fire-setting facts regarding danger and inappropriate use of fire



**56,300 FIRES**

Each year, fires started by youths nationwide account for an average of:

**110**

Civilian Deaths

**880**

Civilian Injuries

**\$286 million**

Direct Property Damage

- More youth set fires in homes, while teens are more likely to set fires outside.
- 60% of youth-set home fires happen in their own bedroom.
- 50% of youth-set fires in homes were started by cigarette lighters.



## Mercer County Youth Fire-Setter Intervention Program



Curiosity about fire is natural...  
setting fire is not

### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Robert Taylor**  
**609-278-4845**

# Program Information

## What to do if You Suspect Your child of Setting Fire

If your child is displaying fire-setting behavior, you and your family are at a higher risk of suffering the consequences of fire. Remember, you are not the only parent ever to face this problem. Mercer County offers a youth fire-setting prevention program.

### Program Benefits Include

- A contact person in your area
- Determination of potential level of risk for repeat fire-setting incidents
- Fire education for the youth and their family
- Referrals for additional services

### The Goal of Educational Interventions is to Teach Youth & Their Families

- The power of a single match
- The speed of fire and its uncontrollability
- The consequences of fire play
- The laws surrounding intentionally set fires
- General home and family fire safety

### Becoming a Part of the Solution

- Youth fire-setter intervention programs are successful in reducing fire-setting behavior.
- According to NFPA, without intervention more than 75% of youth who have played with or set fire will do it again.
- The fire service is often the first to identify youth who have set fires.
- Fire service personnel are experts in fire safety.
- That makes the fire service the logical place for an intervention program.

### Intervention programs within the fire service

- Evaluate youth and their families to identify needs and determine risks for future fire setting.
- Provide appropriate fire safety education
- Help youth and their families meet other needs (counseling, social services, etc.) by referring them to other resources within the community

## All Contacts Are Kept Completely Confidential

- All educational interventions are conducted by Youth Fire-Setter Intervention trained fire personnel.
- If needed, youth are referred to appropriate agencies and services to make sure they receive the help he/she needs to prevent a potentially life-threatening disaster.
- If you suspect a youth is developing a fascination with fire, or has been caught playing with fire inappropriately, call the **Mercer County Youth Fire-Setter Intervention Program**.

## CONTACT INFORMATION



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- \* For all ages. Always practice and model fire safety in your home
- \* Conduct regular home evacuation drills
- \* See [www.firesafety.com](http://www.firesafety.com)

## Prevention Tips for Youth Fire Setting

### 5 Years Old and Under:

- Take the mystery out of fire setting and teach your children that fire is a tool, not a toy.
- Matches, lighters and any heat-producing appliances should be locked up.
- Teach your children to tell an adult if they find matches or a lighter. Reward them for doing so.

### 6-12 Years Old:

- Take the time to teach your youth about the potential destruction of fire.
- Set the example for fire safety. Have your youth watch the way you:
  - \* Cook: turning pot handles away from reach, never leaving a burner unattended, etc.,
  - \* Light: the fireplace, barbecue and candles

Take a moment to teach them that these tasks must be performed only by adults or under adult supervision.

### 13-17 Years Old

- Teach and model conflict and stress management skills.
- Involve your adolescent in decisions that affect her or him. Encourage positive relationships with peers and adults and be available for regular communication.
- Provide healthy activities (sports, youth groups or religious organizations)