

Juvenile Firesetters Program

The purpose of the Juvenile Fire Setters Intervention Program is to prevent further injuries and property damage resulting from fire related incidents by providing educational and referral interventions to youth and their families. The Gastonia Fire Department Fire & Life Safety Educator coordinates the program with assistance from Fire Investigators, the Gaston County Fire Marshal's Office, the Gastonia Police Department, and the NC Department of Juvenile Justice.

Objectives

1. To reduce the number of delinquent complaints of juveniles involved in fire-related incidents through quality Fire and Life Safety Education Programs.
2. To provide referred juveniles, their family members, and caregivers with information about juvenile fire setting as it relates to:
 - Fire and burn injury awareness and prevention
 - Legal consequences
 - Community impact
 - Home fire prevention practices
 - Home escape plan development
3. To identify and refer juveniles who need a more comprehensive intervention to appropriate community services.
4. To put in place an organization of community agencies having a common interest in reducing and preventing the number of fire incidents involving juveniles.
5. To provide guidelines and policies for the development, implementation, evaluation and record keeping of the JFIP program by the Fire and Life Safety Educators and other members of the Gastonia Fire Department.

Facts about Kids and Fire

- 40% of all those arrested for arson are juveniles.
- 38% of all children in grades 1-8 have played with matches or lighters.
- Each year almost 1,000 children age 14 and under die in fires that occur in their homes.
- Child fire play is the leading cause of death in residential fires for preschool children.
- Each year more than 28,000 residential fires occur due to child fire play, with direct property damage of more than \$150 million.
- The most frequent cause of fires involving unattended children in multiple-death fires is child fire play, usually matches or lighters.
- Curiosity is the most common reason children play with fire.
- Three-quarters of all fatal victims of children playing with fire are 5-years of age or younger.
- Juveniles have accounted for roughly half of the arson arrests since 1994
- Nearly 70% of the children who die, and 55% of children who are injured in fire are age four and under.
- Fires started by children playing (mostly with matches or lighters) represent 3 out of 10 preschool child fire deaths.

Source: National Fire Protection Association