



MYTHS ABOUT FIRE SETTING

1

MYTH: Fire setting is “just a phase” that the child will outgrow.

FACT: Fire setting is dangerous behavior and not a phase.

2

MYTH: Scare tactics will stop fire setting behaviors

FACT: Scare tactics do not get to the root of the fire setting behavior. If not addressed, the fire setting behaviors will continue and possibly lead to tragedy.

3

MYTH: Children who set a fire will be treated as minors by the justice system.

FACT: Juvenile cases can be transferred to adult court at the age of 14. For certain offenses in Idaho Code 20-509 (such as arson) there is no minimum age.

THE BEST WAY TO GET A YOUTH WHO SETS A FIRE THE HELP THEY NEED IS THROUGH EARLY FIRE SETTING INTERVENTION.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Anyone can refer a child to the YFIP program.

- Firefighters
- Investigators
- School Resource Officers
- Juvenile Services
- Family Members

REFERRAL FORM



CityOfBoise.org/Youth-Firesetting-Intervention



FOR ALL EMERGENCIES DIAL 911

BOISE FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION

208-570-6500 | TDD/TTY 800-377-3529
www.BoiseFire.org

BOISE FIRE DEPARTMENT YOUTH FIRE SETTING INTERVENTION PROGRAM



BOISE FIRE DEPARTMENT

208-570-6500



CURIOSITY ABOUT FIRE IS NORMAL, BUT SETTING FIRES IS NOT.

The Boise Fire Youth Fire Setting Intervention Program aims to educate and intervene with children who have misused fire.

The goal is to prevent fires, injuries, deaths and destruction of property.

WHAT IS YOUTH FIRE SETTING OR FIRE MISUSE?

Any behavior involving the improper or unapproved use of fire, including:

- » Playing with matches or lighters
- » Setting fires intentionally or accidentally, fire play, or experimenting with flames
- » Experimenting with fireworks or explosives
- » Igniting aerosols or accelerants
- » Watching or supporting others misusing fire

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- » Children accepted from 3-17 years of age
- » No cost
- » One-on-one class
- » Private
- » One or two days (approx. 2 hours long)
- » At least one parent/guardian must participate

CHILDREN MISUSE FIRE FOR MANY DIFFERENT REASONS.

- **Curiosity Fire Setting**
Many young children are fascinated by matches and lighters but don't know how destructive fire can be. Children may set fires because of curiosity or poor judgment. They may imitate adults who light cigarettes, candles, or campfires. Incidents can happen when adult supervision is lacking and the child lacks fire safety knowledge.
- **Thrill-seeking Fire Setting**
This is typically seen in older children who are experimenting with fire for an adrenaline rush and have not thought about consequences. They are often highly influenced by peers and social media. The incident may involve readily available materials or other items such as fireworks.

- **Troubled Fire Setting**

Mental or emotional disturbances can cause fire setting behavior. Children with troubled fire setting behavior can range from preschoolers to teenagers. The behavior is done as a way to express anger, frustration and feelings of powerlessness.

- **Delinquent Fire Setting**

This is typically seen in teenagers or pre-teens with a history of setting fires. The behavior is motivated by a willful intent to cause destruction. It can be influenced by boredom, peers, group initiation rituals or to hide other crimes.

- **Pathological Fire Setting**

Children with this motivation often have multiple underlying cognitive, behavioral and mental health conditions. This type of fire setting is very concerning because the child uses fire as a means for receiving gratification, without regard to others.

WHAT IS YOUTH FIRE SETTING INTERVENTION?

Youth Fire Setting Intervention Specialists are specially trained members in the Boise Fire Department who work to intervene when a child has set a fire.

Fire setting intervention can range from providing age-appropriate education to identifying children who need a professional level of care and making appropriate referrals.