

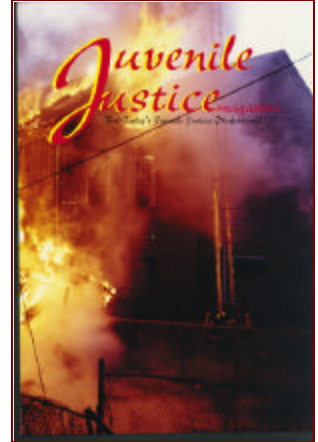
# Juvenile fire setters program

Do you have a child that is curious about fire, or a child who has problems with setting fires?

## Juvenile Fire setters

When a young person jumps from being a "curious experimenter" to an "intentional fire starter" there's a good chance that the "crisis fire setter" is not far behind.

The difference between a fire that is warm and friendly and one that is ferociously hot and destructive is size. A small fire in a camp site can take the edge off cool night air, and a raging forest fire can destroy a thousand acres in a few hours. Fire has been one of our most important tools on our journey from time immemorial to the present day. It is also one of the easiest weapons to acquire and use.



Perhaps that is why "juveniles are arrested for greater share of this crime than any other," says Eileen Garry, of the U.S. Justice Department, in the report, Juvenile Fire setting and Arson.

In 1993 for example, almost half of all arsons were committed by children under 18. One third of those children were under 15 and nearly seven percent were under ten. In 1995, juveniles accounted for 52 percent of all arson arrests.

Juvenile fire setters fall into three categories, according to an OJJDP report: curious experimenters, intentional fire setters and crisis fire setters.

The first group (curiosity fire setters) is composed primarily of children under seven who experiment with, or cause accidental fires.

The intentional fire setters are those between 8 and 12, and "although the some fires are motivated by curiosity, a greater proportion of their fire setting represents underlying psychosocial conflicts," Garry says.

The third group, called the "crisis fire setters" consists of adolescents between 13 and 18 who tend to have a long history of undetected fire play and fire starting behavior. Fires started by those in this group are most often the result of psychosocial conflict or intentional criminal behavior.

One of the major reasons why this behavior is fairly common is because the ingredients are readily available. When this availability is combined with the mental instability of some children, you have the potential for serious and deadly personal injury and extensive

property damage, in the more than 600,000 fires reported every year, over 300,000 of those started by juveniles.

If you know of any child that plays with fire, or think that your child or one of their friends plays with fire, contact the Avra Valley Fire District or the local law enforcement agency.

Mon – Fri

8:00am – 5:00pm

682-3255