

## **Fire and children**

Fire is one of the most common causes of accidental injury and death among children. They are naturally drawn to the warmth and light of fire, but without proper guidance this can turn into a dangerous fascination. The following tips will help keep your children safe.

### **Talking to your children about fire**

Give children under five clear instructions of what they should and shouldn't do. With older children, it's better to also explain why. You will need to talk about fire safety more than once, to make sure they have remembered and understood what you have taught them. Tell them:

- To tell a grown-up if they see matches or lighters lying around
- Never to play with matches, lighters or lighted candles
- Never to play, or leave toys, close to a fire or heater
- Not to put things on top of heaters or lights
- Not to pull on electric cables or fiddle with electrical appliances or sockets
- Never touch pans on the stove

### **Fire instructions for children**

It's important to talk through with children what to do if there's a fire – don't avoid it for fear of frightening them. Children need to know how to react, as there may not be an adult around to tell them what to do if a fire happens. Here are the basic instructions to give to your children:

- If they see smoke or flames, they should tell someone straight away – a grown-up if possible
- Get out of the building as soon as possible
- Never go back into the building for anything
- Never hide in a cupboard or under a bed – get out of the house and call for help straight away
- Find a phone and call 911 and give the address of the fire slowly and calmly
- Make sure that children know their address so they can raise the alarm
- Practice stop, drop and roll with your child and instruct them how to do this if their clothes are on fire

### **Have an escape plan**

Have an escape plan and make sure that everyone in the house is familiar with it, including children, and babysitters. Keep all exits clear and practice the escape plan with children.

## Make your home safe for children

Here are some measures you can take in your home to make sure your children stay safe:

- Don't leave children on their own in a room where there's a fire risk
- Keep matches, lighters and candles in a place where children can't see or reach them - and put child locks on cupboards
- Put a child-proof fireguard in front of an open fire or heater
- Don't let children play or leave toys near a fire or heater
- Keep portable heaters in a safe place where they can't be knocked over when they are being used or stored
- Never leave children alone in the kitchen when you're cooking and never let them play near the cooker

**Please check your alarms to make sure they work.** Have a working smoke alarm can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. Statistics show that working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire by nearly 50 %. Installing both smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system reduces the risk of death in a home fire by 80%.

For more information, a smoke detector or batteries for your smoke detector, contact your local fire department or Franklin County Department of Emergency Services at (717) 264-2813 or [www.franklindex.org](http://www.franklindex.org).