



FLORIDA YOUTH FIRESETTER INTERVENTION SPECIALIST AND PROGRAM MANAGER WRITTEN EXAM

The following educational information can be used as a study guide of material that is used for the FYFIN certification examination. Students must submit a copy of their National Fire Academy Youth Firesetter Course or students must have completed the Florida Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist and Program Manager Course.

Youth Firesetter Stats

Each year in the US, an average of 3700 children ages 14 or younger are injured or killed in residential fires. Forty percent of these fatalities are under the age of five.

Children playing with fire are the leading cause of child fire fatalities. Children playing with fire cause over 8000 structure fires each year. These fires resulted in 50 deaths and 450 civilian injuries.

Children ages 6 to 10 years set 43% of home structure fires by fire play. Children ages 5 years and younger are the second highest age group at 36% by fire play. Male youths rank 82% of setting home structure fires by fire play.

July has the highest amount of home structure fires and outside fires caused by youth fire play. March, June and August come in as a tie as the second highest amount of home structure fires caused by youth fire play.



The time period of the highest percent of home structure fires set by youths was between 4pm to 8pm. The second highest time period was from 12pm to 4pm.

The day of the week with the highest percentage of home structure fires caused by fire play was Saturdays. All the other days of the week were 1 to 2 percent from all being the second highest.

Both Saturday and Sundays were the highest percentage of outside fires caused by youths.

Lighters were used 55% of the time by youths to start all types of fires while playing with fire and matches came in as the second most popular device for them to use.

Bedrooms are the leading area of origin within home structure fires when youths play with fire. The mattress and bedding are normally found as the point of origin.

Youth ages 11 to 17 years are the highest age group to start outside fires. Age 6 to 10 years are the second highest juveniles.

The crime of arson in Florida has the highest rate of youth involvement of all other crimes. Youths account for 52% of arson fires in the US. In Florida, youths account for 60% of arson fires.

Fires that occur within small geographic areas are known as FIRE CLUSTERS. Clusters can represent the signature actions of youth serial firesetters. Fire clusters should be tracked and studied for the development of predicting a model of possible future fire sets.

Serial youth firesetters have been identified as having a high likelihood of having experienced the following,

- **Childhood abuse.**
- **Physical abuse.**
- **Sexual abuse.**

These types of abuse can be triggering points for fire setting behavior. Youth firesetters that set unoccupied structures on fire increase their efforts to occupied structures when not caught. Research shows that of the youths that were caught setting these types of structures fires, failed to report the fires to anyone. Most triggers for youths may represent some type of emotional tipping point where the fire setting becomes a form of relief.

FBI LISTS THE FOLLOWING FIRE-SETTING MOTIVES:



- REVENGE
- EXCITEMENT
- VANDALISM
- PROFIT
- CRIME CONCEALMENT
- EXTREMIST VIEWS

FBI DEFINITIONS

- **Mass Arson** – Series of at least three fires at the same location in a short period of time.

Example: multiple fires set at a school within the same day.

- **Spree Arson** – Series of at least three fires in different locations in a short period of time.

Fire Play vs Fire Set

Most children are curious about fire. It is not normal for children to play with fire. They feel they can control small fires. Curiosity motivated firesetting is generally unintentional and is listed as fire play. Many children playing with fire will stop their curiosity when they get caught or get burned.

If curiosity firesetting is not stopped, the fire play will become **FIRE SETS**. These kids need prevention and educational intervention. Fire set is when the child knows that what they are doing with fire is wrong.

NFPA 1035

This is the Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist, and Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications.

Chapter 8.1 General Requirements for the Intervention Specialist

A person assigned to the duties of a Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist shall meet all the following requirements: Shall meet and maintain the minimum licensing, certification, or qualification requirement within their jurisdictions and professions.

Chapter 8.1.2 General Requisite Knowledge

This person should have the following knowledge:

1. Fire safety education.
2. Interview techniques.
3. Symptoms and signs of abuse or neglect.
4. Stages of human development.
5. Family dynamics.
6. Characteristics of youth firesetting.
7. Federal, tribal, state and local laws governing youth.
8. Regulations governing confidentiality.
9. Fire science.
10. Arson and explosives laws.
11. Human behavior during a fire.
12. Fire causes and prevention.
13. Firesetter characteristics and behavior.

Study Guide

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14. Mental health options.
15. Legal consequences.
16. Hazard identification.
17. Current fire protection systems and devices.
18. Emergency reporting.

Chapter 8.2 Administration

Assemble forms and materials, policies and procedures affecting the intake process of youth. Assemble interview tools and material resources so that youth and their families can be interviewed. Establish a case file that will include forms.

Chapter 8.4 Education and Implementation

Initiate contact with family and review the incident and case file. Conduct an intake and interview process. Determine intervention and referral options. Implement educational, mental health, and legal interventions.

Chapter 8.5 Evaluation

Collect and record feedback from the youth firesetter and their family.

Florida Fire and Arson Laws

Florida Statute Chapter 806 – Arson and Criminal Mischief Law.

FS806.01 ARSON

1. Any person who willfully and unlawfully, or while in the commission of any felony, by fire or explosion, damages or causes to be damaged:
 - a. Any dwelling, whether occupied or not, or its contents.
 - b. Any structure or contents thereof, where persons are normally present, such as: jails, prisons, or detention centers; hospitals, nursing homes, or other health care facilities; department stores, office buildings, business establishments, churches, or educational institutions during normal hours of occupancy; or other similar structures.
 - c. Any other structure that he or she knew or had reasonable grounds to believe was occupied by a human being, is guilty of arson in the first degree, which is a felony in the first degree.
2. Any person who willfully and unlawfully, or while in the commission of any felony, by fire or explosion, damages or causes to be damaged any structure, whether the property of himself or herself or another, under any circumstances not referred to in subsection 1, will be guilty of arson in the second degree.
3. Structure means any building of any kind, any enclosed area with a roof over it, any real property, any tent or portable building, and any vehicle, vessel, watercraft, or aircraft.

FS806.031 Arson Resulting In Injury To Another

1. A person who perpetrates any arson that results in any bodily harm to a firefighter or any other person, regardless of intent or lack of intent to cause such harm, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree.
2. A person who perpetrates any arson that results in great bodily harm, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement to a firefighter or any other person, regardless of intent or lack of intent to cause such harm, is guilty of a felony of the second degree.

FS806.10 Preventing or Obstructing Extinguishment Of Fire

1. A person who willfully and maliciously injures, destroys, removes, or in any manner interferes with the use of, any vehicles, tools, equipment, water supplies, hydrants, towers, buildings communication facilities, or other instruments or facilities used in the detection, reporting, suppression, or extinguishment of fire shall be guilty of a felony of the third degree.
2. A person who willfully or unreasonably interferes with, hinders, or assaults, or attempts to interfere with or hinder any firefighter in the performance of his or her duty shall be guilty of a felony of the third degree.

FS806.101 False Alarms Of Fires

Whoever, without reasonable cause, by outcry or the ringing of bells, or otherwise, makes or circulates, or causes to be made or circulated, a false alarm of fire, shall for the first conviction be guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree.

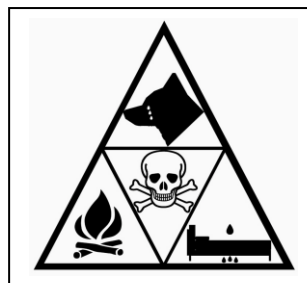
The second conviction under this section shall constitute a felony of the third degree.

What is “*State’s Age of Accountability Law for Arson*”?

The age of a child that the State Attorney will prosecute for the crime of arson.

The Macdonald Triad Research shows three common childhood behaviors to predict a possible serial killer.

- Bed wetting up to 12 years old.
- Animal cruelty.
- Firesetting.



Who is Setting Fires and Why?

Youth firesetting is a community problem and not just a fire department or parent's problem.

Types of Youth Firesetters

Curiosity / Experimental.

Crisis / Troubled / Cry-for-help.

Thrill-seeking / Risk-taking.

Delinquent / Criminal.

Pathological / Severely disturbed.



Curiosity / Experimental Firesetter

- Boys and girls ages 2 to 17 years old.
- Exploring their environment.
- Lack of understanding of the power of fire.
- Active learners trying to seek knowledge.
- Low impulse control.
- Failure to think through on consequences.

Where do Curiosity Firesetters play with fire – Bedroom, bathroom, closet and outside the house.

Crisis / Troubled / Cry-for-help Firesetter

- Calling attention to a problem.
- Family dysfunction may be common.
- May have poor coping/problem solving skills.
- Has access to ignition sources.
- May have had a recent crisis or trauma.
- There may be a series of firesetting.

Fires are sometimes directed at specific targets or objects. Fire may be symbolic of what's causing the problem. Physical, psychological, sexual abuse is possible. Youth may use fire to express anger, sadness, frustration, powerless feelings related to stress or a major change in life.

May lie or make up a wild story about the cause of the fire. May ignore the fire and lack any remorse. Will continue to set fires until needs are identified and met. The crisis to the youth is based on their experiences, not those of the parents.

Where do Crisis / Troubled Firesetters set fires – Bedroom, certain areas within the house, wildland, outside the house.

Thrill-seeking / Risk-taking Firesetter

- They get an adrenaline rush with fire setting.
- Uses available combustibles.
- Failure to think through on consequences.
- Easy access to ignition sources.
- Peer influenced; enjoy attention.
- Most fire sets take place outdoors.

They have poor decision-making skills and lack of judgement. May oppose authority and lie about the fire setting incident. Adolescents may be afraid of consequences. Often embarrassed when caught. May tell the truth if confronted in a respectful manner and presented with facts and evidence. May try to extinguish the fire or summon help because their motive was not for the incident to get out of control.

Where do Thrill-seeking / Risk-taking Firesetters set fires – Bedroom, school fires, wildland and dumpsters.

Delinquent / Criminal Firesetter

- Willful intent to cause destruction.
- Boredom or the desire to show off.
- Failure to think through on consequences.
- Crime concealment or for revenge.
- Peer influenced; enjoys the attention.
- May have low self-esteem.

May have a troubling behavioral history. May have problems at school. May be influenced by alienation from families or society. Most incidents are often well planned. Accelerants will be used when multiple points of origin are found. They fail to experience guilt for the fire that they set. If not caught, this firesetter will have a great potential to move to violent anti-social behavior.

Where do Delinquent / Criminal Firesetters set fires – Abandoned structures, target schools, wildland, and dumpsters.

Pathological / Severely disturbed Firesetter

- Can ultimately set hundreds of fires.
- Firesetter denies and lies about involvement.
- May possibly have a high IQ.
- May document their fires.
- Normally has a history of disorders.
- Home abuse is possible.

Fires have a distinct pattern. They believe they are smarter than fire and police officials. May interject themselves into the investigation. Will have a long history of dysfunction. They have difficulty establishing relationships. Family may have their own issues. Left unaddressed, their fire could injure or kill someone. This firesetter is very dangerous, their use of fire is a means of receiving gratification without the regards to others.

Where do Pathological / Severely disturbed Firesetters set fires – Target people, target areas, when the need arises and anytime, anyplace.

Common Traits

- Lack of fire safety knowledge with the family.
- Lack of parental skills and supervision.
- Chaotic home environment.
- Smokers are present in the home.
- Household with very few rules or consequences.
- Substance abuse in the family.
- Verbal, physical or sexual abuse.

Four Common Factors That Influence Firesetting Behavior

1. Easy access to ignition materials.
2. Lack of adequate supervision.
3. A failure to practice fire safety.
4. East access to information on the internet.

Firesetting Targets

Most firesetting incidents are located near the firesetters house. They will target structures or areas that they are familiar with. The older the firesetter, the bolder they will become when it comes to firesetting.

Two out of every five fires are intentionally set.

High schools and middle schools are targeted the most.

One-third of the high schools and middle schools damaged by fire were caused by several small fires that occurred between midnight and 4 am.

Intentional set fires were the cause 44% of the time in schools.



Fire in these types of schools were more likely to be caused in the restrooms and locker rooms than any other school area. The deadliest school fire occurred in Chicago in 1958 at Our Lady of the Angels School. Three nuns and 92 children died by a fire set by another student.

Components of an Intervention Program

There are five (5) components of a Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention program:

- 1. Identification.**
- 2. Intake process.**
- 3. Screening process.**
- 4. Intervention strategies.**
- 5. Follow-up.**

What are some ways that youth firesetters may be identified?

- Burn holes in their clothes or personal items (toys).
- Burns on their body.
- Caught setting a fire.
- Always drawing pictures of fire.
- Finding ignition sources on them or their room.
- They smell like wood burning.

Points of Entry include:

- Parents or caregivers.
- Police or fire officials.
- Teachers / Schools.
- DJJ system / Courts.
- Mental health.
- Social service.

DJJ and State Attorney decisions to take action will depend upon the following:

- Violation of laws.
- Age of accountability.
- Local county procedures.
- Firesetting history.
- Death, serious injury or large property loss.

Identification

Identification is the first component of the intervention program. We need to address the types of fires and their locations within our jurisdiction. What kind of fires are other fire departments near you running? What do local law enforcement say about these fires?

The pathway to intervention depends on several factors:

1. Violation of law may require referral to department of juvenile justice (DJJ).
2. The age of the child involved.
3. The nature and severity of the fire.
4. Any previous firesetting incidents of the child.

Intake Process

The intake process is the second component in the intervention program. Your intervention program must have a consistent and reliable intake process. The intake process involves collecting initial information about the youth firesetter, their family, and the incident that brought the youth to the program.

The intake form could be completed by the fire investigator, Florida Forestry Service personnel, or by the agency conducting the intervention program. The intake form should be used for each referral or complaint of youth firesetting behavior. The process is very important and must have the following items:

- **Know the difference types of Point of Entry.**
- **Reasonable response time of 48 hours once they have been referred.**
- **Available contact person(s).**
- **Have intake forms available.**
- **Priority to the case.**

Screening Process

The third component in the intervention program is the screening process. The screening process directs the user to ask a series of questions and records specific information about the youth firesetter. The screening process should identify, record, and evaluate factors contributing to the youth firesetting behavior.

During this process, we need to determine why the fire setting occurred. Did the child receive any satisfaction from starting or putting out the fire? As we interview the youth, our team is also interviewing the parents/caregiver. Our objective is to explore the factors that may have influenced the firesetting.

Intervention programs should use a valid screening instrument that assigns numerical value. One of the most important components of the screening process is determining the level of risk of repeating fire setting behavior.

Information on the screening form should include the following:

- **Information about the firesetting incident and history of previously set fires.**
- **Information about the youth.**
- **Social information.**
- **Information about the family.**
- **Facts about the home environment.**
- **Recent changes in the youth's immediate situation.**

When scheduling a screening interview, we need to make it convenient for the family, within reason. Inform the parents of the length of the interview, at the most two hours. Stress to the parents how important this screening process is.

When we schedule a location for the screening process, consider the following:

- **It will be determined by the department/program policy.**
- **Consider safety issues.**
- **Have a partner for the home visit.**
- **Remember to remind the family of the appointment.**

During the in-home screening process, offer the family the following:

- **Conduct a home safety inspection.**
- **Check or install a working smoke alarm.**
- **Clear exit pathways.**
- **Identify fire hazards for the family.**

If the screening process cannot be completed at their home, the fire department would be the next best place. Most classrooms at the fire department have enough rooms to conduct the screening process; however, we will need to control the noise. Make sure that someone from your team is always with the child when the parents screening takes place.

During the screening process, the interviewer must remember to be nonaccusatory. Create an information-sharing environment. Explain why the program exists and describe how the process will work. Explain how intervention strategies are chosen and how participation is required for the family. **Stop the interview** if you discover that abuse is happening to the child.

Building Rapport for the Process

- Be on time, dress appropriately and show confidence.
- Be prepared, do your homework on the case.
- Be respectful.
- Start with small talk.
- Be comfortable with the process.

Determining Level of Risk

After the screening process, the intervention specialist team must determine the level of risk for the youth for repeat firesetting. This process is completed to determine the proper intervention.

SOME RISK

DEFINITE RISK

EXTREME RISK

Some Risk

- **Most common and lowest level of risk.**
- **At least one curiosity motivated event has occurred.**
- **The incident is often unintentional.**
- **Education intervention is often very successful.**

Definite Risk

- Anger and/or revenge related fire.
- Attention was being sought by the youth.
- Malicious intent and /or crime concealment.
- This can be the crisis/troubled/cry-for-help firesetter.
- Could be a clear intent to harm people or destroy property.
- To make someone or situation go away.
- Rarely attempts to put the fire out, will often retreat.
- Educational intervention can be successful.

Extreme Risk

- Severe firesetting behavior.
- Their behavior is influenced by psychological, social, and environmental factors.
- This will be a small set of fire setters.
- Youths can exhibit patterns of aggressive, deviant, and criminal behavior.
- Educational intervention should not be attempted at first; however, if DJJ or mental health suggests educational intervention after they have completed their program.

Determining Interventions

Types of intervention:

- Fire prevention and education.
- Mental health.
- Social services.
- Juvenile Justice – DJJ – Legal.

Intervention can be used alone or in tandem. These types of interventions work to lower the ***recidivism rate – repetitive firesetting behavior.***

Educational intervention

Benefits nearly all youth firesetters and their families. Includes all members of the household and can be done in tandem with other interventions.

Mental Health Intervention

Will handle cases beyond the curiosity firesetter. They also handle special needs situations, and they focus on what is causing the behavior.

Social Service Intervention

Can provide families with voluntary training in parenting skills, anger management, or dealing with a particular loss or change in lifestyle. They can also mandate intervention services if child abuse or neglect is suspected.

Department of Juvenile Justice

DJJ helps to ensure family participation. Local AHJ-fire department may mandate justice system involvement.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of case and youth information is so important and should not be shared with anyone who is not part of the team, the fire investigator, and law enforcement. Parents will need to sign the Release of Liability and Information document to work with other intervention teams.

Follow-Up

The most overlooked component of the intervention program is the follow-up. Parents may not report recidivism and we as fire prevention and education professionals need to perform follow-ups. Follow-ups need to be performed four (4) weeks after the program completion and may continue if necessary.

Proper Education Intervention

What is a youth firesetting education intervention program – it is the act of intervening and interfering with the intent of modifying the outcome.

Education intervention should include the following:

- **Fire science.**
- **Fire safety.**
- **Decision-making skills.**
- **Consequences of inappropriate decisions.**
- **Cause and effect relationship of fire.**
- **Legal ramifications for firesetting.**

Levels of Prevention

- **Primary** – Designed to teach individuals what to do in case of fires. It is community-based fire safety education which will include school fire prevention and injury prevention programs.
- **Secondary** – When the student learns what a smoke alarm sounds like, and how to use a fire extinguisher. How to implement a home escape plan and the use of child restraint in vehicles.
- **Tertiary** – Reducing the negative impact of a fire incident over a long term. Prompt medical care at burn facility for those individuals that have been burned. Extreme risk youth firesetters detailed at a treatment center.

Five E's of Fire Prevention

The five E's of fire prevention is part of any type of public education. We can implement these into our education intervention programs.



Education - For the youth firesetter we will provide fire prevention awareness, change behavior, and eliminate risky behavior. Most firesetters benefit from education.

Engineering – Modifying an environment to enhance safety, like fire alarms and fire sprinklers. Includes the use of technology such as in working smoke alarms and child-resistant lighters.

Enforcement – Requires people to obey the laws and fire code requirements (arson laws). With youth firesetters it might be the judge that mandates this program to a youth firesetter.

Economic Incentives – Can be positive or negative.

Positive would be from a reward or incentives for actions. Insurance companies reduce premiums due to a homeowner having a fire extinguisher and smoke alarms in the house. Negative would be from fines or punishments for actions, could be a fine from the fire department for false fire alarms over a certain time period.

Emergency Response – Prevention will not eliminate the need for emergency response. The fire service needs to provide rapid, trained, and adequately staffed fire and EMS units.

Child Education Intervention

We must not assume that parents and children know the basics about fire safety and fire prevention. The first step would be to evaluate the existing fire safety knowledge. Obtain a baseline knowledge of fire safety by playing a game or asking questions.

Fire safety messages to children need to be:

- Correct, current and consistent information.
- Many of our messages offer only increased awareness, we want to also change behavior, so teach them how.
- Direct the behavior you want the person to perform.
- Teach them what is the purpose of fire.
- The appropriate uses of fire.
- Rules and potential dangers of fire and fireworks.

Stages of childhood development tell us **“what is possible”** at any given age or stage of development. Be sure students understand the process intellectually based on their age.

Cognitive development age for preschool children:

- Focus on one topic at a time.
- Limited understanding of cause and effect.
- Parents overestimate a child’s level of understanding.

Cognitive development age for elementary school children:

- Limited understanding of the power of fire.
- They can understand cause and effect relationships.
- Poor judgement on anticipating when things could go wrong.

Cognitive development age for teenage school children:

- Lack of initiative, tied to brain development.
- Questionable decision-making skills.
- Impulsiveness and attention problems.

In order for the child education intervention to work effectively, we must include:



Behavioral and Learning Disabilities

Just because a child has a cognitive, behavioral or learning disorder, does not mean that the disorder caused the fire setting behavior.

ADHD – Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- One of the most common cognitive disorders in children that can continue into adulthood.
- They struggle to pay attention and stay focused.
- Principal characteristics are:
 - *Inattention.*
 - *Hyperactivity.*
 - *Impulsive.*
 - *Verbal expressions.*

ASD – Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorders:

- Autism is very common today.
- We need to understand what type of spectrum the child or adult has.
- Behaviors may include not wanting to be touched, loud noises or flashing lights.
- Most like a routine and they stick to it.

Learning Disabilities:

- LD is a disorder where the child's brain has difficulty receiving, processing, storing, or communicating information.
- They could lack actual performance in reading, speaking, reasoning, emotional maturity, and social skills.

BD – Bipolar Disorder:

- Characterized by mood cycling between periods of intense highs and lows.
- Children with BD experience unusually intense emotional states that occur in distinct periods called "*mood episodes.*"
- These episodes can result in damaged relationships, poor school performance, and even suicide.

Anxiety and Depression:

- Can interfere with daily life for the child and everyone around them.
- There are a variety of anxiety disorders including:
 - *Panic disorder.*
 - *Obsessive-compulsive disorder.*
 - *Post-traumatic stress disorder.*
 - *Social anxiety disorder.*

ACE – Adverse Childhood Experiences

Mounting research and evidence suggests that multiple traumatic experiences during childhood can lead people towards risky and dangerous behavior. ACE is related to childhood trauma that affects mental and physical illnesses, substance abuse, and risky behavior. Research has shown a strong link between ACEs and youth firesetting.

Parent Education Intervention

Parents and caregivers are very important students also, they will be reenforcing what you taught their child. Most parents do not realize the dangers of fire and fireworks. Some lack insight into what children can or cannot understand. Some parents may have deficits and challenges like their children.

We must remind parents of the four common factors that fluence firesetting:

- **Access to ignition materials.**
- **Lack of supervision.**
- **Lack of fire safety in the home.**
- **Easy access to internet information.**

Child Abuse or Neglect

All 50 states have a mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect. Members of a youth firesetting program would be classified as mandated reporters. Most states require an immediate report upon gaining knowledge or suspicious of abuse or neglect.

Physical Abuse – unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, welts, bite marks, antisocial behavior, fear of adults, and problems in school.

Emotional Abuse – Hostility or stress, lack of concentration, and eating disorders.

Sexual Abuse – Inappropriate interest or knowledge of sexual acts, nightmares, bed wetting, changes in appetite, fear of a particular person or family member.

Neglect – Unsuitable clothing, dirty or unbathed, extreme hunger, lack of supervision from parents.

Delivery of the Program

Punishment alone does not teach a child about the dangers of fire. All adults and children benefit from fire prevention and fire safety education. Program materials should be simple and age appropriate. Education may be delivered in various ways:

- **Several children grouped together by age.**
- **One-on-one session with a child.**
- **Once a month program or only as needed.**

Program delivery – identify the following:

- Educational goals – teaching the child to make the right choices.
- Format of the learning environment.
- Teaching materials to be used.

Consideration for program delivery:

- Age and abilities of the youth.
- Abilities of the parents / caregivers.
- Potential communication challenge.
- Culture of the family environment.

Reasons for a small group or one family session:

- Parents may dominate the conversation.
- Parents may condemn other students.
- Parents may intimidate other students.

The program should not:

- Reward the child by letting them play on a fire truck after the education intervention.

How long should the program be?

- It really depends on the group session or one-on-one session.
- Some programs conduct a one-time session for three to four hours.
- You may decide to do a one-day program or two-hour sessions for four weeks.
- Both formats have been used and been successful.

Classroom environment:

- The classroom needs to be distraction-free.
- The program should not be at a busy fire station.
- Make sure your audio and visual needs are met.
- Is the classroom big enough and do you have two classrooms for the adult and child sessions.

Educational intervention should include:

- Fire safety.
- Fire science.
- Consequences of fire setting.
- Need for personal responsibility.
- Need for good decision-making skills.

Teaching young children:

- May want to keep parents with small children.
- Simple strategies and friendly props.
- Age-appropriate media.
- Young children learn from repetition.

Teaching preteens:

- Build rapport.
- Discuss arson laws, penalties, and consequences.
- Assignments and homework.
- Restitution.

Teaching older children – teenagers:

- Ask them what happened.
- Use simple case studies to make your point.
- Discuss arson laws, penalties, and consequences.
- Assignments and homework.
- Restitution.

Planning for the Interview

Interviewing requires a certain amount of skill and training. Fire investigators and intervention specialists should have a clear understanding of the facts of the case before interviewing. The case facts will help the interviewer to create a plan for the interview to include questions that we do not have the answers to.

Once a youth has been identified, they should be interviewed as soon as possible to ensure the facts. The purpose of any interview is to gather both useful and accurate information that is related to the case.

Information needed before the interview:

- Full legal name.
- Date of birth.
- Home address.
- Last 4 digits of social security number.
- Cell-phone number of child.
- Parents name.
- Contact information for parents.

Two investigators or specialists should conduct the child interview. One to conduct the interview and the second to read body language.

We must ask ourselves why we want to interview?

- **Gathering information – due to an incident (fire investigation).**
- **Gathering intelligence – who knows WHAT?**
- **Screening youths – who's involved and was a law broken?**
- **Intervention / treatment – type of intervention for youth.**

The Interview Setting

The type of interview setting depends on the following:

- Interview objectives.
- Who is the person being interviewed?
- The specific circumstances surrounding the person being interviewed.

Chair placement strategy is very important.

- When interviewing male youths, position the interviewer's chair at an angle to the child's chair.
- Face-to-face seating is confrontational and inhibits rapport development with the child.
- When dealing with female youths, place a table between you and the youth, females like separation.
- To increase tension, the interviewer can wheel their chair in front of the youth and can move in closer.
- To reduce tension, the interviewer should sit back in their chair and provide distance between the youth and themselves.

Interviewing vs Interrogation

Interviewing people is nothing more than gathering **FACTS**. Investigators and Firesetter Intervention Specialists must gather facts of the case before we can try to understand what happened.

When we interview people regarding a fire incident, we ask them to provide us with a **TIMELINE** on what occurred. Fire Investigators will take the timeline and match it with what is seen at the incident known as the fire behavior patterns or the **FIRE TIMELINE**.

Six deadly sins of interviewing

1. **Interrupting** – let the person talk, do not hijack the interview.
2. **Interrogating** – we must interview first to gather facts before naming a suspect.
3. **Arguing** – do not be argumentative, you will get nowhere.
4. **Judging** – do not be judgmental to a family or an individual.
5. **Advising** – do not give advice on what the interviewee needs to do.
6. **Doing all the talking** – ask your question and then shut up and listen.

Once investigators understand that a crime has occurred, we can start searching for details on who committed the crime, Investigators can now switch to interrogation and issuing Miranda rights. The interrogation is a set of designed questions to get to the truth.

Youths do not need their parents present when police or fire investigators are interviewing them and gathering information, FACTS.

Interviewing Youths

The most important part of the youth interview process is building a rapport and showing confidence. Build a relationship but let them know this incident was very serious and you need their help to find out what happened.

When interviewing children seven years old and younger, try giving them crayons to draw on paper while you ask them questions. This helps to build rapport.

Some teenagers will not have any fear of consequences, so you must follow through on what you say. With teenagers, you need to be credible because they will challenge you. Let the youth know that if they tell the truth they can be placed in a education intervention program instead of going to jail (DJJ).

When interviewing, use the acronym **IRONIC**:

- **I = Introduction** – introduce yourself and state why we are here. You need to know the case better than the youth.
- **R = Rapport** – this is the most important part of the interview process, building a relationship with the youth.
- **O = Opening Statement** – start by saying, *“We are here today to talk with you about the incident that occurred . . .”* You want to see what story they will tell. The youths want to know how much you know about the incident and what evidence you may have.
- **N = Narrative** – we need certain questions answered to the incident. Ask opened ended questions. Now listen to the youths. You want to encourage the youth to talk more so you should . . . nod your head, like you agree with them, say the word *OK, YES, I UNDERSTAND*. By doing and saying these things, you are telling the youth that you want to hear more.
- **I = Inquiry** – this is where you ask certain questions that you need answers to. You will also ask questions that you already know the answers to, to see if the youth will lie.
- **C = Conclusion** – this is where you finish up the interview. Thank the youth for telling the truth. Ask them, *“Is there anything else you want to state or tell me?”*

Youths may play the game called **“Give the Dog a Bone.”** The child will offer a small admission of guilt to give the investigator or Firesetter Intervention Specialist the impression that they are making a full confession. Do not fall for this. Example: *“I was in the boys restroom, but I did not light the fire.”* The state attorney or DJJ may want the youth to admit to the crime for the youth to pass the program.

Program Manager

NFPA 1035

This is the Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist, and Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications.

Chapter 9.1 General Requirements for the Program Manager

A person assigned to the duties of a Youth Firesetter Program Manager shall meet all the requirements prior to being qualified in Chapter 8, Intervention Specialists.

Chapter 9.1.1 General Requisite Knowledge

This person should have knowledge of federal, tribal, state, and city laws, including arson and the illegal use of explosives, program policies and procedures, and organizational management.

Chapter 9.2.1 Administration

Formulate program policies and procedures. Be able to perform a community needs assessment (CNA). Use verbal and written communication skills along with gathering and analyzing information. Be able to develop a program budget, identify and assign qualified personnel to deliver the intervention programs per policies and procedures. Supervise the Intervention Specialists and obtain performance evaluations on those personnel. Program managers shall maintain records and case files for each youth firesetter.

A program manager can be appointed from different agencies such as the fire service, law enforcement, mental health services, social services, and the department of juvenile justice. A Job Performance Requirement (JPR) for a program manager would be the ability to develop and lead a local or county-wide program.

A program manager shall be able to answer the following questions:

- **What are the demographics of your community?**
- **Who is setting fires in your community?**
- **What kind or types of fires are being set by youths?**

A program manager should be able to participate in the political process. Promote positive relationships with partner agencies, political leaders and government agencies. Should show commitment, integrity, and ethical behavior along with a continued effort to continue their professional development in youth firesetting.

The Life Cycle of a Youth Firesetting Intervention Program (YFIP) would include:

- **Conducting a community analysis.**
- **Identify the problem.**
- **Recruit stakeholders.**
- **Develop and implement a program.**
- **Deliver the program.**
- **Evaluate the program.**

Study Guide

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Who Could Be a Stakeholder?



The Coordinating Agency

Fire department's role in the program would include:

- Conducting screening interviews with youths and their families.
- Provide educational intervention.
- Make referrals to partner agencies.
- Interface with law enforcement and juvenile justice.

Task force members role in the program would include:

- Maintain awareness of legal issues.
- Keep the program visible in the community.
- Seek ongoing support for the program.
- Getting key personnel certified as Intervention Specialists.
- Ensure that the community has a central point of contact.
- Ensure a central location for data collection.
- Assist in marketing the program.
- Establish a referral mechanism for youth firesetters.
- Develop a plan for case follow-up.
- Create program tools.
- Determine staff training needs.
- Design a program evaluation process.

The four most important components that a Task Force Member can provide is,

- **Time.**
- **People (personnel).**
- **Services.**
- **Funding.**

Education Intervention Should Include



Why Would a Program Fail?

- **Lack of Time.**
- **No Resources.**
- **No Training.**
- **No Commitment.**

Follow Up

The program manager needs to follow through and make sure their staff is calling and parent and talking with the youths that completed the program. Primary follow-up is within 30 days of the completion of the program and then follow up in 60 and 90 days. Secondary follow-up should take place within the six months of completion.

Staff Training

While having an adequate number of staff members, it is more important to have the right staff. Every staff member that is approved to be dealing with youths must possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their tasks and duties.

Budget Process

The program manager must lead the process of estimating the start-up costs of providing a program. Training costs will be ongoing for staff and staff members may need overtime to complete their tasks. There is a cost for marketing brochures, documents, copying, program materials and training aids.

Once the budget is estimated, the next step is funding the program. That cost can come from the fire department or an outside source. **Funding sources can come from:**

- **Grants.**
- **Donations.**
- **Private foundations.**
- **Local businesses.**
- **Community organizations.**

Data Management

The program manager must develop policies and procedures. Assign a case number to each youth to maintain confidentiality, so no names are used. Keep an accurate record of each youth and their stats.

After several years, **your program should be able to produce the following data:**

- **Total case numbers from year to year.**
- **Individual and family characteristics of youths.**
- **Types of fires.**
- **Referral agencies used.**

Legal Considerations

- **Confidential youth information.**
- **Mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect.**
- **Juvenile Justice referrals.**
- **Medical information – HIPAA laws.**
- **Parents/caregivers rights.**
- **Reading of juvenile Miranda rights.**
- **Program consent forms.**
- **Fire investigative and police reports.**