

What is the “Juvenile Firesetter’s Intervention & Prevention Program?”

Our educational programs are designed for youth and teens, ages 7-17.

All our classes are taught with respect and concern for the youth’s well being.

Our goal is to not only provide critical fire safety knowledge, but to also help develop better

decision-making skills and build a youth’s self-esteem to with-stand peer pressure.

Lesson topics include fire science and behavior, accountability, fire safety and survival skills. We also provide follow-up evaluation and tracking up to a year after a child has completed the program.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

The Police Department, Fire Department or Court, may make the initial referral into the program based upon these criteria:

- ☞ This is the youth’s first offense
- ☞ The youth are under the age of 17 and did not commit a serious or felonious offense
- ☞ The youth are willing to take full responsibility for the offense



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Should I be concerned that my child plays with fire?

A. Yes. It is natural for children to be curious about fire. It is not ok for your child to use it.

Q. Why do children play with fire?

A. Children set fires for many reasons; sometimes they set fires out of curiosity, sometimes out of boredom or to fit in with peers. They also sometimes light fires to seek attention or cry out for help.

Q. My child’s fire was just a small fire, what’s the big deal?

A. All big fires start out small, it is not the size of the fire that matters, but the fire setting actions that need to be of real concern.



Q. If my child sets a fire can he/she be charged with a crime?

A. Yes. In NH a child as young as age 10 can be charged with Arson.

Q. If my child is charged with Arson, will he/she go to jail?

A. Not in every situation, many courts may order your child to complete a juvenile firesetter education program, do community service or pay a fine.

Q. If my child does not complete the Juvenile Firesetter Program, what will happen?

A. If court ordered, your child may be referred back to the court, where new sanctions may be imposed that may include placement.

Q. Is fire setting a phase that the child will grow out of?

A. Fire setting is not a phase. Studies show that fire setting is a progressive behavior and if the child does not receive qualified fire safety education and intervention services, the child will continue to light more fires, and those fires will be more risky, more destructive and could be deadly.

Home Safety Tips



Store matches and lighters out of children's reach and sight, up high, **preferably in a locked cabinet.**



Never use lighters or matches as a source of amusement for children; **they may imitate you.**



If your child expresses curiosity about fire or has been playing with fire, calmly but firmly explain that **matches and lighters are tools for adults only.**



Use only lighters designed with child-resistant features. **Remember child-resistant does not mean child proof.**



Teach young children and school-age children to **tell an adult** if they see matches or lighters.



Never leave matches or lighters in a bedroom or any place where children may go without supervision.



If you suspect your child is intentionally setting fires or unduly fascinated with fire, **get help!** Rochester Fire Department, or Police Department, can put you in touch with trained experts that can educate your child in prevention or intervention knowledge.

HISTORY Juvenile Court Diversion

Rochester, like many New Hampshire cities, experienced a dramatic increase in juvenile delinquency in the late seventies. In 1980, the number of juvenile petitions heard in District Court increased by 33%.

In 1981, under a grant from the New Hampshire Crime Commission's Comprehensive Children and Youth Project the Rochester Juvenile Court Diversion Program was started with the intent of providing delinquency prevention services.

In 1995 a Juvenile Firesetter's Intervention Program was developed in response to the many calls in concern for youth curiosity fires and other fire related incidents.

In 2011, RPD's Juvenile Court Diversion Program achieved Accreditation, making it one of the first court approved diversion programs in the State.

Rochester Fire Department Fire Prevention & Education

The City of Rochester Fire department is a 63-member "combination" Fire Department, 38 full-time and 25 paid on-call, providing fire, rescue and public assistance services to the Rochester, East Rochester and Gonic Sections of the community.

Rochester Fire personnel provide a wide variety of services including fire safety inspections, programs in the City Schools, and a proactive approach to fire safety in the community.

Juvenile Firesetter's Intervention & Prevention Program



*A collaborative service between
Rochester's Police and
Fire Departments*



**(603) 330-7149 Juvenile Diversion
(603) 335-7544 Fire Prevention
Education**