



WEST MICHIGAN FIREmatch

Dedicated to Intervention, Referral & Education for Juvenile Firesetting



- ◆ **Intervention** - for children who have already experimented with fire
- ◆ **Referral** - for children who need additional education or mental health treatment
- ◆ **Education** - for children of all ages to increase understanding of the dangers associated with fire

IN MICHIGAN, 239 children have died in fires over the past five years. A significant number of them were due to fires started by children.

The NFPA reports trends in fires set by young children in the US annually result in:

- 95,000 fires
- 3,000 injuries
- Over 300 deaths
- \$300 million in property damage

The FBI Crime Index reports that juvenile and adult arson cause an annual average of 560,000 fires, 750 deaths, 3,700 injuries, & \$1.5 billion in property damage

- 55% of all arson arrests in the US are children under age 18
- Nearly half of these are children under 15
- 6.8% are under age 10
- The crime of arson has the highest rate of juvenile involvement

Understanding Who & Why children set fires

Curiosity/Experimental

- Low Risk
- Access to matches & lighters
- Lack understanding of the destructive nature of Fire
- Boys & Girls 2-10
- Unsupervised

Troubled/Crisis

- Extreme risk
- Have set 2 or more fires
- May not understand destructiveness of fires
- Mostly boys- all ages
- Use fire to express emotions
- Will set fires until needs are met

Delinquent/Criminal

- Often teens with a history of firesetting, skipping school, antisocial behavior or drug/alcohol abuse
- Fires are set with intent to destroy, as acts of vandalism. Or malicious mischief
- Targets include schools, open fields, abandoned buildings

Emotionally Impaired

- Fires may be random, ritualized or with intent to destroy property
- Chronic history of behavioral, social, emotional or physical problems

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Phone: (616) 456-3028