

# Why do children start fires?

## Curiosity/Fascination

### Approx 3-6 years of age

Associated with the attraction to the colour, light and energy released by the flame.

## Attention seeking

### Approx 6-12 years of age

Associated with a change in the family situation, e.g. new baby, parental separation, learning difficulties.

## Peer pressure

### Approx 10-14 years of age

Associated with difficulties relating to peers, low self-esteem.

## Anger/Revenge

### Approx 8-14 years of age

Associated with family and social difficulties.

## Malicious mischief

### Approx 9-16 years of age

Associated with family and social difficulties.

*Younger children tend to light fires in or around home and only rarely set out to cause damage by their fire lighting.*

*By contrast, older children are more likely to light fires away from home and may be motivated by malicious intent.*

# How to get help



The Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program is a free service for parents and is strictly confidential.

## Contact your local fire station

Darwin Fire Station	(08) 8946 4107
Casuarina Fire Station	(08) 8927 1222
Humpty Doo Fire Station	(08) 8988 0296
Alice Springs Fire Station	(08) 8951 6665
Jabiru Fire Station	(08) 8979 2502
Katherine Fire Station	(08) 8973 8014
Nhulunbuy Fire Station	(08) 8987 1906
Palmerston Fire Station	(08) 8932 1335
Tennant Creek Fire Station	(08) 8962 4403
Yulara Fire Station	(08) 8956 2061



Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service  
PO Box 39764  
Winnellie NT 0821  
[www.fire.nt.gov.au](http://www.fire.nt.gov.au)

*The Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service would like to thank the New Zealand Fire Service and cue|design for the use of their artwork.*



Northern Territory Government



# Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program

## Is this your child?



## Do you need help?

Helping parents to overcome the problem of child fire lighting



## The program

The aim of the program is to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and millions of dollars of property damage caused by juvenile firesetting, through a trained firefighter delivered intervention program.

The program content and delivery varies according to the age and maturity of the child.

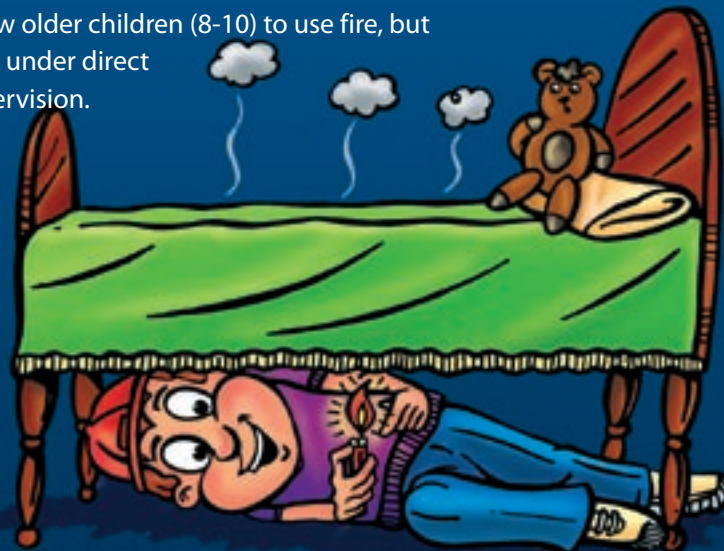
The child is visited in the home by a trained firefighter (youth liaison officer) over a number of weeks. In partnership, the practitioner, child and parents develop an awareness of fire safety issues in the home and work towards a safer home environment.

Through the use of the Fire Awareness and Intervention module, the child develops a greater respect for fire and its consequences.

All children with fire lighting tendencies are catered for in this program. Referrals are received by parents over the phone, firefighters in the field, following lectures, via children's mental health, Police, Department of Justice, schools and other concerned agencies. Participation is voluntary, except where the referral is the outcome of a police or court program.

# What parents can do to prevent most child fire lighting

1. Teach very young children that fire is a tool. We use it to cook food or heat the home. It is not magic, it is not a toy. It is dangerous and only for adults to use carefully (use the example of driving a car or using power tools).
2. Keep all matches and lighters out of reach of very young children. A child resistant lighter is not child proof, not even for a two year old.
3. Have children hand over matches and lighters to adults when they find them. Children need to be rewarded or praised for doing this.
4. Set a good example. Care should be taken with matches, lighters and fire. The home should be fire safe, in particular flammable liquids should be properly stored and never used to light a fire.
5. Allow older children (8-10) to use fire, but only under direct supervision.



### Myth:

Firefighters are pyromaniacs

### Fact:

It is a behavioural problem which can be stopped. It may occasionally be a symptom of more widespread problems.

### Myth:

It is normal for children to play with fire

### Fact:

While curiosity about fire is common, child fireplay is not normal and can be deadly.

### Myth:

It is a phase that the child will grow out of

### Fact:

It is not a phase and you must deal with it immediately or it will continue.

