

## It Only Takes ONE...

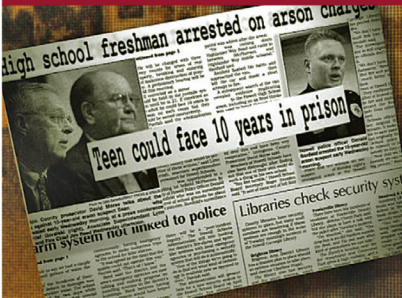
Match, Lighter, Dare,  
Kid, Event, or Fire  
to Negatively  
Impact a Child's  
Future

### Medical



- Burn injuries are life-changing
- 40% of fires that kill young children are started by youth misusing fire

### Social



- School expulsion, damaged reputation, denied housing and jobs
- Without proper intervention, fire misuse is 5x more likely to continue



Keep It  
From  
Happening

**Straight Talk Works!**

### Financial



- Parents can be held responsible for paying costs of youth-set fires: average damages to home/building \$22,600; a local fire cost \$715,000!

### Legal



- 50% of all arson arrests are minors
- Youth can be prosecuted as an adult and have a permanent criminal record

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## What To Look For

**Youth may be misusing fire if any of these are found:**

- Lighters, matches, or fireworks in a child's room, pockets, school locker, or belongings.
- Unexplained scorch marks or burned/melted areas on carpeting, floors, toys, clothing, papers, furniture, yards, playgrounds, etc.
- Lighters, matches, aerosol sprays, fireworks, or flammable liquids are found in a different location, missing, or discarded (e.g. in garbage, on ground, or hidden under something).
- Smell of smoke, gasoline, kerosene, body sprays, and other accelerants on a youth's clothing or in an area they have been playing.
- Videos or pictures of fire misuse on the youth's cell phone, computer, or online video/social media accounts.

**Even if a youth hasn't yet misused fire, they may be at a higher risk for future misuse if they:**

- Show an extreme fascination or interest in fire.
- Observe others misusing fire (including adults).
- Frequently view online videos, blogs, or websites that have a focus on or display unsafe fire use.
- Play video games involving fire balls, Molotov cocktails, explosives, flame throwers, and other dangerous uses of fire.

**Youth WITH Straight Talk  
Stay Safe and Succeed**  
(Less Than 1% Repeat Firesetting)

**Youth WITHOUT Straight Talk  
Continue to Set Fires**  
(36% Repeat Firesetting)

## Keep Your Family Safe

Children and fire can be a dangerous and deadly combination. Take an active role in eliminating a child's access to ignition (fire) sources and in increasing supervision by an adult:

- Keep lighters and matches out of reach of children, in a locked cabinet.
- Inspect your home for other ignition sources (e.g. candles, lit cigarettes, stoves, bonfires, grill lighters, fireplaces, fireworks, etc.) and remove or secure them.
- Keep accelerants like gasoline and lighter fluid outside of the home and locked up.
- Talk about the potential influence of friends and ways to overcome peer pressure to misuse fire.
- If you suspect a child is misusing fire, regularly search their clothing, belongings, bedroom, backpack, etc. for matches/lighters. Calmly but firmly explain these are tools for adults only.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms: working smoke alarms save lives, cutting the risk of dying in a home fire in half.
- Make sure everyone knows the sound of a smoke alarm, and how to respond.
- Make a home fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year (at night and during the day).
- There are many reasons why youth misuse fire. It can be a sign that a child needs additional counseling, support, or behavioral/emotional/mental help.

Without proper intervention or if only punishment is used, fire misuse will likely continue. You can help stop it by referring families or your own child to the free Straight Talk program. For details, additional tips, and counseling resources, visit:

[www.traumaburn.org/prevention/straighttalk](http://www.traumaburn.org/prevention/straighttalk)

## Why Attend Straight Talk?

### Straight Talk:

- Is needed: Without specialized intervention, youth are likely to continue dangerous fire misuse.
- Works: Nationally-recognized and scientifically-proven effective program for families.
- Helps youth ages 8-17 who have misused fire (or are at risk for): playing with matches/lighters, firesetting, experimentation, arson, lighting accelerants, fireworks, bottle bombs, pulling false fire alarms, observing others misusing fire, etc.
- Is a supportive, non-punitive 1-day class provided bi-monthly for free in Ann Arbor.
- Builds decision-making skills to positively re-direct youth.
- Uses interactive teaching to create safe home, school, and community environments.
- Is taught by a multidisciplinary staff of social workers, firefighters, arson police, former youth firesetter, burn survivors, and medical personnel.
- Engages families: Siblings (8 years and older), may come for education. Parent(s) or legal guardian must attend the entire program with youth.
- Is open to everyone! We welcome referrals from any individual, parent or organization. For questions or to make a referral, visit [www.traumaburn.org](http://www.traumaburn.org) or contact Karla Klas, RN at [kahrns@med.umich.edu](mailto:kahrns@med.umich.edu) or 734-232-3815.

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This free program is made possible by the generous donations of the Ann Arbor Fire Department, Bloomfield Township Fire Department, Dearborn Firefighters Burn Drive, FRIENDS of the University Hospitals, and the support of many other community organizations.



Identify • Support • Intervene



Educate • Prevent • Engage

## Straight Talk: Working Together to Address the Community Issue of Youth Fire Misuse

A nationally recognized family-focused program

