

HOT issues

A publication of the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal's Youth Fire Prevention and Intervention Program

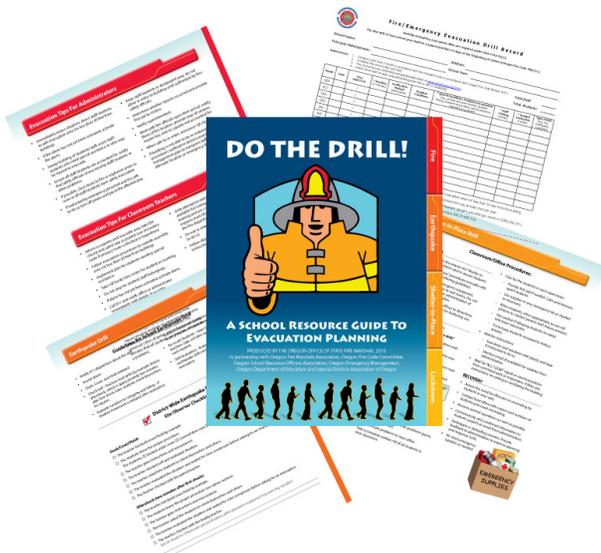
Statewide partners to develop 'A School Resource Guide to Evacuation Planning.'

Oregon Office of State Marshal (OSFM), in partnership with key emergency planning agencies across the state, developed a comprehensive guide to emergency evacuation planning for Oregon schools.

Do The Drill! :A School Resource Guide to Evacuation Planning provides information on evacuation planning and conducting drills not only for fire, but also for earthquake, hazardous materials release, and lockdown. The guide was delivered to over 1700 public and private schools, 200 school resource officers, and 340 fire departments in August to assist emergency responders and schools around the state to collaborate in providing fire safety training and proper fire drill procedures during Fire Prevention Week and throughout the school year.

ness curriculum and teacher training for grades 1-8. It was during these trainings that school administrators, teachers, and school resource officers expressed concerns and inquired about appropriate evacuation procedures and emergency planning. In response, OSFM called on the Oregon Fire Marshals Association, Oregon Emergency Management, Oregon School Resource Officers Association, Special Districts Association of Oregon/PACE, and the Oregon Department of Education to assist in the development of *Do the Drill*. Partnering with these agencies ensured that information provided for the various types of emergencies came from those with the most expertise in that area.

Click *Do The Drill! : A School Resource Guide to Evacuation Planning* to access to an on-line copy of the guide. For more information, contact the OSFM Youth Fire Prevention and Intervention Program at 503-934-8240 or 503-934-8230.



Oregon law (ORS. 336.071) requires schools to instruct and drill students on emergency procedures. In an effort to assist schools in meeting this legislative requirement and to ensure the provision of the most accurate information about prevention and response, OSFM provides fire awareness and disaster prepared-

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“Is She Cinderella or the Wicked Witch?”: An Exploratory Analysis of Adolescent Female Firesetting”

by Robert Stadolnik, Ed.D. and Theresa Manela,
LICSW

Despite the overall decline in juvenile crime rates during the past decade, a closer inspection of the data reveals significant gender disparity in juvenile offense and arrest trends. For example, arrest rates for adolescent females have either increased, or decreased less, for most types of offenses, in comparison to rates for adolescent males (National Mental Health Association, 2006). Female juvenile offenders are more likely to be incarcerated for status offenses than their male counterparts, but the violent crime arrest rate of girls has increased twice as fast as the rate for boys during the past decade (Meichenbaum, 2006). The growing body of literature relative to female offenders identifies adolescent females as a particularly vulnerable subset within the larger population of juveniles who are reported to exhibit delinquent behaviors (Connor, 2002; Mathis, 2007; Sherman, 2005; Meichenbaum, 2006).

The vulnerability of female adolescents is reflected in the rates of sexual abuse and physical abuse victimization for this group, which are significantly higher than those of their male counterparts. Some researchers suggest that between 43-75% of antisocial girls have been sexually abused, whereas the general findings for males in this category reflect rates ranging from 12-13% (Connor, 2002). Similarly, Meichenbaum (2006) found that among female adolescents in the juvenile justice system, 70% have histories of physical abuse whereas only 32% of males involved with juvenile justice systems have been victimized. And yet, while the greater vulnerability of females involved with delinquency has been consistently corroborated by a number of researchers in the field, girls are much less likely than boys to be referred for mental health, social, or educational ser-

vices (Meichenbaum, 2006). As adults, the prognostic picture for antisocial adolescent females appears to be considerably bleaker than for their male counterparts; delinquent females tend to have higher rates of arrest, psychiatric illness, substance addictions, and unstable lifestyles.

Firesetting behavior amongst children under the age of 18 is both a dangerous and costly problem that has become a point of growing national concern (Barreto, Boekamp, Armstrong, & Gillen, 2004; Pollinger, Samuels, & Stadolnik, 2005). In 2005 the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) reported that although the overall rates for arson-caused fires have declined, over 50% of arson arrests continue to be

attributable to juveniles. The property loss and damage resulting from juvenile-set fires is estimated to cost \$276 million each year (Leihbacher, 2006).

While statistics illustrate the stark realities of the scope of the juvenile firesetting problem, the topic has received considerably less attention as a focus of study when compared to other juvenile conduct problems (Kolko, 2003, Slavkin, 2001). It is widely accepted that 10-15% of juveniles involved in firesetting are female, yet these young adolescents have received less than 1% of the research attention in the field (Doctor, Jackson, & Manela, 2008).



Study Methods

Individuals whose data was selected for analysis in this study were adolescents referred specifically for a firesetting behavior evaluation to FirePsych, Inc., a specialized private psychology practice, between January, 2002 and December, 2006. During this period, 488 children under the age of 18 participated in structured firesetting behavior evaluations. Males referred for evaluation (N=408) represented 83.6% of the total population and females (N=80) represented 16.4%. All females between the ages of 12-17 (N=63) referred during this time were initially included. Three females referred for evaluations did not complete their participation and were therefore excluded

Adolescent Female Firesetting, *continued*

from this study. An equal number of males (N=60) were selected at random from the total population of 12- to 17-year-old males (N=281) who were eligible. The total study population was N=120.

Results and Discussion

Results of this study reveal no significant differences in aggression profiles between males and females. On behavior measures, males were described by caretakers as displaying significantly higher levels of inattention and hyperactivity symptoms than females. On standardized personality measures, female subjects were more likely than their male counterparts to display a tendency in thinking/perceiving to distort reality according to their personal needs and desires and in holding an inappropriate facade of self-adequacy to mask insecurity.

With respect to firesetting, adolescent females were significantly less likely to have pulled a false alarm and to have used an accelerant as part of their firesetting behavior, and were more likely to have set fewer fires than their adolescent male counterparts. There were no significant gender differences for incidence of injuries related to firesetting nor for the presence of burn marks in the home. Several firesetting behavior characteristics, including curiosity about fire, thinking about fire, interest in playing with fire, and beliefs that fire is special or magical, were studied with no significant differences found between genders.

There were significant differences between the genders on level of placement and firesetting. Males placed in foster care were significantly more likely to have set more than ten fires than adolescent females in foster care, and males in residential treatment care were more likely to use accelerants than females who were placed in residential care. Adolescent females placed in residential care or living with their parents were significantly more likely to have set a fire in school.

There were significant findings for ethnicity as it relates to firesetting patterns among adolescent females. African-American and Causcasian females were especially more likely to have set fewer fires than Hispanic females. African-American females were most likely



Theresa Manela, LICSW, is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, who joined FirePsych, Inc. as a firesetting behavior diagnostician in 2002. Her background includes extensive experience working with children and adolescents in residential treatment and foster care settings. Additionally, Ms. Manela has led psychotherapy groups for younger children involved in firesetting behavior, as well as parenting groups and social skills groups and has provided clinical supervision to residential treatment staff.



*Robert Stadolnik, Ed.D., President of FirePsych, Inc., is a Licensed Psychologist and author of *Drawn to the Flame: Assessment and Treatment of Juvenile Firesetting Behavior* (2000) and the *Firesetting Risk Assessment Tool for Youth* (2010). Dr. Stadolnik has completed or supervised over 1500 firesetting behavior risk assessments, completed research studies on specialized firesetting populations including adolescents in residential care and adolescent females, and has consulted to fire safety programs, residential treatment centers, public school systems, and state child welfare agencies. He has trained nationally and internationally on problem firesetting to mental health and public safety audiences. Dr. Stadolnik partnered in the development and implementation of an innovative 45-day, evidence-based firesetting assessment protocol for short-term residential placement and clinically supervises a five-stage residential treatment program for problem firesetting. Recently Dr. Stadolnik has partnered to establish a specialized group home environment for adults with histories of mental illness and problem firesetting released from long term hospital care.*

Adolescent Female Firesetting, *continued*

to have not used accelerants and Caucasian females were much less likely to have pulled a false alarm.

These findings suggest that many of the risk factors commonly used to estimate risk levels for males (e.g., total number of fires, accelerant use and versatility of firesetting) may not be as readily applicable to females. This finding may point to the potential need for the development of more gender-sensitive assessment standards within the firesetting field. It follows that these findings also have implications for established intervention models used to respond to adolescent firesetting behavior (fire safety education, social skills training, behavior modification), since treatment models and outcome studies have largely been normed on male population samples.



A particularly robust finding in this study pertains to differences in location of fire across the genders; specifically, 18% of female subjects reported that the secondary location for their fires was in school, whereas the same was true for only 5% of males in the sample. This finding has implications for school personnel and school safety administrators; namely, that when responding to a school fire, care should be taken to avoid making assumptions regarding the potential gender of the person(s) responsible for the fire.

An unanticipated finding of this study was the interactive effect between ethnicity and firesetting characteristics among the adolescent female subjects. African-American females presented with firesetting behaviors that were less significant in terms of number and complexity as compared to their Caucasian and Hispanic cohorts.

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Retooling Fire Prevention Education - Part Two

by **Judith S. Okulitch, Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal**

The goal of health education is to provide students with the skills and knowledge to be able to obtain, interpret and understand health information, and to use this information to promote health-enhancing behaviors. Positive behavioral outcomes are key measurements of effective health education. Today's state of the art National Health Education Standards (NHES) includes the content area: Injury Prevention/Safety. Oregon's academic standards for health education include two skills and concepts that are directly related to fire and life safety within this content area. In addition to having functional knowledge of fire prevention and emergency preparedness, Oregon students must also be able to demonstrate their knowledge thereby resulting in fire safety enhancing behaviors.

National Health Education Standards (NHES) identify fourteen characteristics of effective health education that lead to positive behavioral outcomes (American Cancer Society, 2007). These characteristics help to ensure students behave in a safe manner while at home, on the move, at school, at work and in the community, and that they know how to get help in case of an emergency. Fire safety educators would do well to partner with health teachers to incorporate these characteristics into existing fire education programs. Developing fire safety curricula aligned with effective health education practices ensures students are receiving evidence-based fire prevention education and that students adopt, practice and maintain fire safety behaviors over a lifetime.

Several characteristics of effective health education curricula can be easily integrated into fire education programs and positively influencing behavioral outcomes of students, in the following ways:

- 1. Focus on specific behavioral outcomes:** Lesson plans for fire safety must have a clear set of behavioral objectives for every grade level. As students grow and develop, so should the fire safety messages and expected behavioral outcomes. While Stop, Drop, and Roll is an excellent behavior to practice, it should not be the only message that

children and adults remember about their fire safety education.

- 2. Addresses social pressures and influences:** Lessons need to provide students with the opportunity to engage in discussion about how personal and social pressures influence risky behaviors. Media and peer pressure are especially influential to middle school age youth.

Television, music, movies and print ads are a permanent and pervasive part of American culture. Many opinions are formed by what we see and hear in the media and ideas about fire are no exception. Fire scenes in movies, on television, and displayed in video games are frequently in conflict with the reality of fire. The influence of media on student's perceptions about fire, the sensationalizing of fire incidents and the minimizing of consequences are all topics which provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills about the reality of fire, as well as their own behavior and attitudes toward fire.

Peer pressure to misuse fire or to use fire in dangerous and risky ways should also be discussed with middle school students. This is especially true in light of what we have learned about bullying and firesetting activity, using illegal fireworks, altering fireworks and manufacturing of destructive devices at this age level and into high school. The internet (i.e. Facebook, Youtube, etc...) provide an immediate outlet for student experimentation with fire and reinforcement of its misuse; the abundant footage of high risk behavior may encourage imitation by youth who may act without assessing the risks. To enable students to make good decisions, they need to understand the health risks as well as the legal, emotional and social consequences of misusing fire or using fire in risky ways.

The next edition of Hot Issues will explore other characteristics of effective health education standards and how to best integrate them into fire education programs.

Highlights from Cultivating Partnerships III: Juveniles with Fire and the Impact of Media

The Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, in partnership with the Oregon Burn Center and Fire Safe Children and Families hosted Cultivating Partnerships III: Juveniles with Fire and the Impact of Media on August 17th and 18th in Eugene, Oregon. One-hundred thirty-one professionals representing 12 states and British Columbia were in attendance. In addition to the 3 plenary presentations and 18 workshops, participants enjoyed networking opportunities including Game Night and an whitewater rafting excursion on the McKenzie River!

The 131 attendees represented multiple disciplines as follows:

51% Fire Service

17% Juvenile Justice

13% Not Identified

11% Mental Health

8% Law Enforcement

Oregon hosts a western juvenile with fire conference every third year in support of a tri-state coalition with the Burn Institute-San Diego and Children's Hospital-Denver. The coalition allows the sharing of resources

and enables each partner to host a conference every third year for professionals in the field of Youth Fire Prevention and Intervention. We thank our partners for the success of Cultivating Partnerships III and look forward to next year's conference hosted by the Burn Institute-San Diego.



Participant's Comments:

"This was the best JFS conference I've ever been to!"

"Excellent Conference!"

"Very eye-opening on social media."

"Lots and Lots of food for thought."

"The best conference I have ever attended."

"The classes were great! I had a hard time choosing between several of them."

"It really hit on what is going on in the world today."

"Wow! Never knew so much information!"

"Great Program!"

"Very well organized and well run."

"Great speakers and presentations-very relevant and current."



* photos by Joseph Troncoso, Portland Fire & Rescue

Firesetting Risk Assessment Tool for Youth (FRAT-Y)

The Firesetting Risk Assessment Tool for Youth (FRAT-Y) by Dr. Robert Stadolnik is described as a “third generation” risk assessment tool that is designed to bridge the gap between purely scientific and actuarial risk prediction measures and the earlier practice of making unstructured and largely unreliable clinical judgments. The FRAT-Y conforms to the best practice guidelines for clinical risk assessment, grounded in a “multiple methods, multiple measures, multiple domains” model, and provides the trained evaluator with a cohesive framework for firesetting assessment that is supported by the existing literature and research evidence.

The FRAT-Y is appropriate for use with children ages 5-17 and is completed by the mental health clinician after all necessary information has been gathered to allow for rating on each of the seventeen risk factors of the FRAT-Y. Clinician ratings are supported by specific criteria that have been



established for each risk factor and described in more detail in the Professional Manual. Individual factor ratings are then

transferred to the FRAT-Y Risk Profile Sheet from which supports the clinician in their estimating an overall risk determination as well as the assignment of primary and secondary firesetting motivations from the thirteen motivation profiles described in the manual. A Firesetting Intervention Worksheet provides guidance in the identification of individual and/or family interventions and supports for each child.

The FRAT-Y is available for ordering online at: www.firepsych.com.

Fire Safe Zone: A Game of Choices for Kids, Fire Educators, and Counselors

Fire Safe Zone is a fun, interactive board game that was developed for fire department interventionists and mental health workers to use with children age 6-12 who have misused fire. In the course of the game, children are exposed to numerous hypothetical situations from everyday life in which they must provide or choose a solution to common problems. Many items focus on fire safety and making safe choices related to fire. Others are designed to help children express feelings, learn problem-solving skills and explore the perspectives of others.

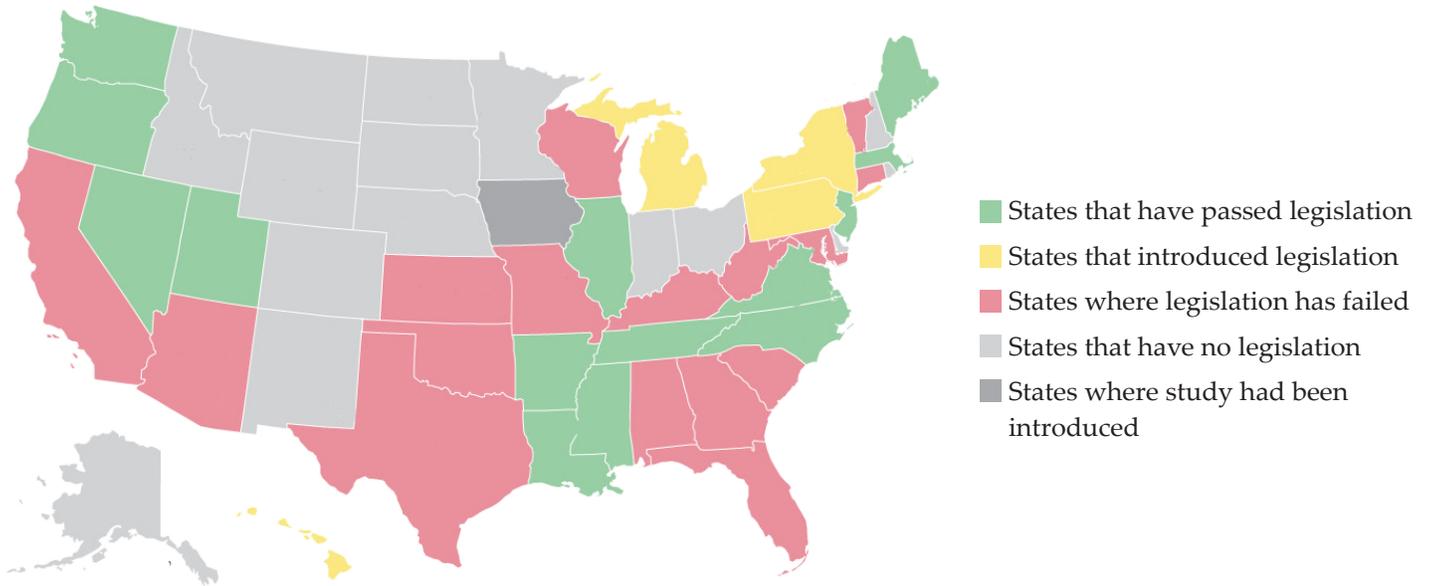


Fire Safe Zone has been field tested by the Bend Fire Department in Bend, Oregon. They describe the game as “an invaluable tool, a way to engage the child's interest, a fun method of teaching, and a way to involve the family.” The Bend Fire Department members were able to use the game multiple times with the same family, and have “vastly different discussions and educational opportunities each time.” Fire Safe Zone is an integral part of the Bend Fire Department’s process of helping children and families develop a fire safe mindset and create a fire safe environment.

Fire Safe Zone has been highly recommended by Fire Smart Kids (www.firesmartkids.com) and is a terrific tool to add to the repertoire of available resources for any professionals who work with children who misuse fire. For more information or to purchase Fire Safe Zone, contact:

Safety Zone, LLC
4720 River Road North
Keizer, OR 97303
www.safetyzonellc.com
info@safetyzonellc.com

Illinois and Massachusetts Join the Growing Number of States to Pass Legislation Banning the Sale and Distribution of Novelty and Toylike Lighters



U.S. Fire Administration. *Status of Legislation to Ban or Limit the Sale of Novelty and Toylike Lighters*. Retrieved from http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/noveltylighters/.

Illinois

“I salute our state’s firefighters for their unwavering commitment to the safety of the people of Illinois”, said Governor Pat Quinn at the signing of House Bill 5139 to ban the sale and distribution of novelty and toylike lighters.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts became the 14th state to ban the sale of novelty and toylike lighters when Governor Deval Patrick signed House Bill 4369 into law on August 9, 2010. The Massachusetts law prohibits the manufacturing, sale, giving away, storing or transport of novelty lighters in the state. The law goes into effect in November, 2010.

SAVE THE DATE!

March 1 - 2, 2011

Mount Pleasant, MI

22nd Annual Michigan Arson Prevention
Committee Juvenile Firesetter Seminar

www.miarsonprevention.org

April 20 - 22, 2011

Estes Park, Colorado

Fire & Life Safety Educators
Conference of the Rockies

www.firesafetyeducators.org

Hot Issues is a quarterly newsletter of innovative strategies, best practices, research and resources for those concerned about juvenile firesetting. *Hot Issues* is published by the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal. Please submit news, announcements, articles, suggestions or resources for review to *Hot Issues*, Editor 4760 Portland Road NE, Salem, OR 97305-1760 or via e-mail to: youthfireprevention@state.or.us. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, *Hot Issues* is available in alternate formats by calling 503-934-8240. *Hot Issues* is available on-line: http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/JFSI_Home.shtml#. *Hot Issues* subscriptions are free of charge.

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