

# Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program

## The Facts about Fire, Kids and Firesetting

**FIRE** - it fascinates and terrifies us. It is critical to our existence. But, uncontrolled, it can cause death, injury and property destruction.

The unsupervised, experimental, mischievous or illegal use of fire by children in the United States has become a major threat to personal safety and property. Recently, juvenile arson arrests have exceeded adult arson arrests for the first time in history. The number of childhood deaths or serious injuries due to firesetting by children is alarming.

Between the years 2004-2008, more than 800 children, between the ages of three and seventeen, have been referred to the Colorado Springs Fire Department's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program. During these past five years, 291 fires have been set by juveniles in our community, resulting in an estimated \$1,256,420 in property loss. Statistically, for every reported child set fire, ten additional child set fires have occurred and were never reported. Nationally, 85% of all children killed in fires die as a result of a fire they started. With these sobering statistics, it is easy to see the need for prevention, intervention, and education for those children with firesetting tendencies.

### **FACTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. 250,000 children are injured and more than 1,000 die each year as a result of burn trauma.
2. The legal age to possess a lighter is eighteen years old.
3. In the State of Colorado, the legal age to be arrested is ten years old – this includes for fire related crimes.
4. Almost half (47%) of fireworks injuries are children under the age of fifteen.
5. It takes just three minutes for a small fire to turn into a raging inferno.

