

## About Juvenile Firesetting

Juveniles are naturally curious about fire. Fire keeps us warm, heats our food and gives us comfort and happiness in the form of a lit candle or a fire in the fireplace. But, fire is a tool that must only be used by responsible adults. Careless use of fire around children may lead to bad future results. Children imitate adults. This could be simply by trying to light a candle. But,



children usually don't understand the dangers of fire. Juvenile firesetting is at epidemic levels in the US. Juvenile firesetters make up approximately

50% of all arson arrests nationwide. Fires started by juveniles playing with fire leads to over \$300 million dollars in property loss and claim the lives of over 100 people each year. Another 3500 are injured.

If your child experiments with fire or has started a fire, you may need help. The South Windsor Juvenile Firesetter Program is available to assist.

### South Windsor Juvenile Firesetter Program

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South Windsor  
**Juvenile Firesetter**  
Intervention and Prevention Commission

## Intervention and Prevention Services

*Prevention Through  
Community  
Intervention.*

South Windsor Juvenile  
Firesetter Program

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## Juvenile Firesetter Program

The South Windsor Juvenile Firesetter program is available to assist parents and guardians of children with firesetting behavior. We have professionals from throughout the community that support the program providing screening (how bad is the problem), education (outline the dangers, stop the behavior) and treatment (where necessary, provide treatment options for more severe cases). The main goal is to provide the appropriate help without a child getting into the legal system.



Some children may only need education to stop the firestarting behavior where

others need more intensive counseling.

No child involved in a firestarting or firesetting incident should go without intervention. Without proper intervention, the behavior may get out of control. Big fires start small. Small fires may lead to bigger fires. Ask for help before it's too late.

### Screening and Assessment

Juvenile firesetters will be assigned a trained Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist (JFSIS) who, along with a South Windsor Youth and Family Services staff member will screen the child and family to help understand why a fire incident occurred. The behavior may be simply a curiosity about fire coupled with the lack of understanding of the dangers and consequences of starting a fire.

On the other end of the spectrum, the behavior may be a cry for help, desire to do harm or pathological fixation with fire. A mental health professional may use a risk assessment tool to help understand the behavior and determine the correct approach to solving the problem.

### Education and Intervention

The correct education or intervention plan is determined by the screening and/or assessment tools. In all cases, the child will be given fire safety education by the JFSIS. Sessions may be as short as 3-4 sessions or up to 8 sessions depending on how the child responds to the training and education.

The educational programs vary and are age and comprehension appropriate. The JFSIS has a wide array of resources including videos, coloring books, games and homework assignments.

Some children with more serious incidents of firesetting may be referred to a mental health professional for outpatient treatment. Other children may be offered treatment at an inpatient facility, but that is generally reserved for the most serious (and rare) cases.

Participation in the program is voluntary unless ordered by the court. It is the goal of the program to keep children out of the legal system when possible and provide the appropriate education and treatment options.

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