

Juvenile Fire Intervention Program

There is substantial evidence indicating that most children express a natural curiosity about fire. Therefore, fire interest can be viewed as part of the developmental process experienced by the majority of normal youngsters. Interest in fire can begin as early as age three and may continue to age six or seven.

Children old enough to understand their actions can be charged with arson or reckless use of fire. Even though older children who set fires could be held responsible for their actions, it is not necessarily the best way to stop the fire setting.

Because fire interest is influenced by several psychological determinants, natural curiosity can lead to fire-risk behaviors. Fire-risk behaviors are defined as those types of activities in which children are accidentally or intentionally involved in an unsafe fire start. Accidental fires occur when children experiment with matches or other fire starting materials in an unsupervised setting. Fire play may or may not result in actual fires. Meanwhile, intentionally set fires may occur with a destructive motivation.

If your child has played or experimented with fire, it is important to take steps to potentially save your child's life and prevent loss of property. The Cedar Rapids Fire Department has developed a concentrated Juvenile Fire Intervention Program that will help identify, educate, counsel and establish referral resources for children and families experiencing the problem of fire play or fire setting.

If you would like to schedule an appointment for you and your child to discuss their fire play or fire setting behavior, please contact the Cedar Rapids Fire Department at (319) 286-5200.