

**REPORT ON CAMPAIGN MESSAGES,
THEMES AND EXISTING
INTERVENTION PROGRAMS FOR
JUVENILE FIRE-SETTERS**

**Prepared for the
National Association of State Fire Marshals**

**Prepared by
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November 1999

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INTRODUCTION

Each year, there are two million fires in the United States. These fires are responsible for the deaths of more than 4,000 Americans and injuries to an additional 25,000 Americans, annually. Of all the causes of fire in the United States (cooking-related accidents, misuse of heaters, arson, etc.) juvenile fire-setting is perhaps the most worrisome. It is even more troubling that, despite the best efforts of parents, educators and care-givers, the incidence of juvenile fire-setting continues to increase.

In an effort to address the growing problem of juvenile fire-setting, the Sleep Products Safety Council (SPSC) is undertaking a two-phased intervention initiative. Phase I, funded by an NASFM grant, entailed the systematic examination and analysis of the existing messages and communications techniques that have been developed to address the problem of juvenile fire-settings. This report represents the culmination of Phase I by presenting the findings of SPSC's analysis and by recommending the communication themes and activities that will be most effective for use in Phase II – the public education campaign of the intervention initiative.

This report is organized to follow the components of SPSC's systematic analysis. First, in the introduction, the report will describe the situation the SPSC project and NASFM grant is meant to address. Next, the report will describe SPSC's methodology for analyzing current messages, themes and programs. Finally, the report will synthesize the findings of SPSC's analysis and make recommendations for design of public education initiatives as envisioned for Phase II.

METHODOLOGY

In order to ensure that recommendations from Phase I lead to an effective public education campaign in Phase II, SPSC designed and conducted the analysis to be as systematic and comprehensive as possible. Therefore, the analysis incorporated not only the juveniles who will be the focus of the campaign, but also those key influencers who will deliver the fire safety messages (e.g., parents, teachers, and fire services personnel). As well, SPSC's analysis of existing programs examined a comprehensive list of messages and themes and incorporated numerous factors that likely contribute to the success of intervention programs.

To examine and analyze existing messages and intervention programs, SPSC first collected materials from existing public education initiatives. These materials were then evaluated on their ability to reach the target audience and positively affect its behavior. Both national and local programs were examined and analyzed.

Based on geographic diversity, SPSC analysts selected four model programs from the universe of 20 local juvenile fire-setting programs in the United States. Information on the programs was collected and analyzed so that, at a minimum, the programs could be compared based on: 1) their institutional basis; 2) messages conveyed; 3) partnerships utilized; 4) the age of the target audiences; 5) campaign elements including participants and methodologies; and 6) campaign materials.

In addition to the four case studies, SPSC examined the messages and themes of national fire safety programs administered by insurance companies, the National Fire Protection

Association, the National Safe Kids Campaign and the United States Fire Administration. Once these programs' messages and themes were identified they were tested (along with potential new messages) through six focus groups.

In order to gauge the impact of the existing fire safety educational programs and test preliminary campaign messages, themes and graphic materials for the Phase II initiative, SPSC worked with Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide and RIVA Qualitative Market Research to conduct six focus groups. The first three were held in Baltimore on October 5, 1999 and consisted of one each of parents, adolescents, and fire service personnel. The remaining three groups were held in Chicago on October 7, 1999 and consisted of one each of parents, adolescents and caregivers (teachers and daycare providers). The next section includes detailed descriptions of the methodology used, findings and conclusions of the focus groups.

The focus groups provided insight into the beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of the target populations (adolescents and the influencers/message deliverers) on eight key topic areas related to fire safety and fire safety education. In-depth reactions to existing and potential safety messages, themes and graphic presentations were elicited and recorded. For example, participants concluded an exercise that measured bedroom fire safety messages against six criteria: 1) appropriateness; 2) relevance; 3) simplicity; 4) ability to hold interest; 5) clarity; and 6) effectiveness of communication. To conclude each group, the participants were "appointed" to a Bedroom Fire Safety Commission and asked to make recommendations for avoiding bedroom fires.

The findings of the case studies and focus groups, as presented in this report, provide the analytical foundation for moving forward with the Phase II public education campaign. Specifically, the Phase I research as concluded provides SPSC with tested campaign strategies, approaches, themes and messages. The subsequent sections of this report provide detailed accounts of these findings.

**FINAL REPORT ON
SIX FOCUS GROUPS WITH
PARENTS OF SMALL CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS,
FIRE SERVICES PERSONNEL AND CAREGIVERS
ABOUT ISSUES RELATED TO
JUVENILE-SET FIRES,
PERCEPTIONS OF THE DANGERS OF FIRE,
AND PUBLIC EDUCATION MEASURES**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Study Purpose and Background

Juvenile fire-setting is perhaps the most worrisome cause of fire in the US. It has climbed steadily, in spite of parents', educators and caregivers' best efforts to educate, counsel, and supervise. The Sleep Products Safety Council (SPSC) commissioned a qualitative market research study in the form of focus groups to further explore the circumstances surrounding "juvenile-set fires." The study was intended to garner perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of adolescents, parents of younger children, teachers and fire prevention specialists toward juvenile fire-setting. Additionally, the study was undertaken to:

- ❖ Gauge the impact of existing fire safety educational programs
- ❖ Test preliminary campaign messages, themes and graphic materials for SPSC's initiative

The insights garnered from the focus groups will enable SPSC to determine the public's perception of the dangers of fire, and how it affects their daily lives. The information gathered will also be instrumental in the development of a second phase of this study, involving the creation of a new public education initiative to help fire service public educators.

B. Methodology

A total of six (6) focus groups were conducted (approximately two hours for the adult groups, and 1½ hours for the adolescents). The first three groups were held in Baltimore (October 5, 1999); the second three, in Chicago (October 7, 1999). Respondents in the two parent groups were recruited and prescreened to satisfy the following criteria:

- ❖ Female and male
- ❖ African Americans and Hispanics
- ❖ 21 to 50
- ❖ Reside in the city in a home, apartment, townhouse or condominium
- ❖ Total annual pre-tax income ranging from \$20,000 to \$35,000
- ❖ Have two or more children living in the household
 - Group 1: between the ages of 8 and 11
 - Group 4: between the ages of 3 and 7
- ❖ Sometimes listen to the radio and read a newspaper
- ❖ Have at least attended college

Respondents in the adolescent groups were recruited and prescreened to satisfy the following criteria:

- ❖ Female and male
- ❖ African Americans and Hispanics
- ❖ 12 to 15

- ❖ Have one or more siblings living in their household
- ❖ Reside in the city
- ❖ Parents have a total annual pre-tax income ranging from \$20,000 to \$35,000

The fire services personnel were recruited and prescreened to have been a fire prevention educator for at least one year.

The caregivers were recruited and prescreened to be males and females who had been teachers or licensed daycare providers for at least one year.

The matrix below provides a group-by-group profile and the scheduling of the groups:

City	Date	Time	Group	Type	# of respondents
Baltimore	10/5/99	12-2pm	1	Parents (8-11)	11
Baltimore	10/5/99	5:30-7:30pm	2	Adolescents	12
Baltimore	10/5/99	7-9pm	3	Fire Service Personnel	6
Chicago	10/7/99	12-2pm	4	Parents (3-7)	10
Chicago	10/7/99	5:30-7:30pm	5	Adolescents	9
Chicago	10/7/99	7-9pm	6	Caregivers	7

The groups were conducted at a standard research facility. The facility was equipped with microphones (for audio-taping) and a one-way mirror (to allow for client observation).

All six groups were conducted by Luc Henderson of RIVA Market Research. Representatives of the Sleep Products Safety Council and Ogilvy Public Relations were present to observe the groups.

C. Statement of Limitations

Focus groups seek to develop insight and direction, rather than quantitatively precise measures. Because of the limited number of respondents and the restrictions of recruiting, this research must be considered in a qualitative frame of reference.

The reader is reminded that this report is intended to clarify cloudy issues and point out the direction for future research. The data presented here cannot be projected to a universe of similar respondents.

The value of focus groups is in their ability to provide observers with comments from a segment of the target population and for decision makers to gain insight into the beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of their consumer base.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Knowledge of Bedroom Fire Safety

In response to the phrase, “bedroom fire safety,” **all of the respondents immediately spoke of the need for smoke detectors, and the practices of “stop, drop, and roll” and staying low to avoid smoke inhalation.** The respondents also expressed concern for children and other family members, friends, neighbors, and pets.

The importance of an **escape plan** was cited by many, as was the necessity for **fire drills**. These led to:

- a fire extinguisher
- a ladder
- calling 911 or another emergency number
- the need for a viable exit

Members of the fire services spoke of the specific need to:

- stay out of closets/not hide
- teach children not to be afraid of firemen, especially uniformed fire fighters
- make sure doors are/remain closed
- do not panic
- use a towel to signal that someone is in the room

Other safety precautions included:

- making sure children are attended
- teaching children what to do, in case of a fire
- checking for potential danger spots, such as stoves, space heaters, electrical hazards, and candles
- refrain from smoking in the bedroom and in the presence of children

The Most Important Issues

Having a smoke detector in proper working order was considered the most important factor in preventing fires or limiting fire damage. The fire services personnel cited smoke detectors as the most important factor in the reduction of fire fatalities. Respondents also reiterated the need for a fire extinguisher and a plan of escape. The advice to “stop, drop and roll” was repeated frequently in this context.

The parents of children in the younger (three to seven) age range appeared to be the most vigilant, perhaps because of the age of their children. They were the most adamant about the need for safety measures, and tended to respond most strongly to the materials exposed to them.

B. Concerns about Fire Safety

Overall Concerns

An extremely high priority was the need for children to know how to react in the event of a fire.

In both cities and across all segments, the respondents exhibited a great deal of apprehension over sleeping through a fire and even through warnings of a fire. Many mentioned that they had done so, or knew someone who had.

Worrisome Situations

While not everyone knew that the bedroom was the site of the majority of fires, or that most fires occur during the night hours, they did recognize potential hazards, which could make the bedroom a dangerous place. In addition to worrying about sleeping through a fire, respondents noted that the bedroom contains an abundance of flammable materials. In addition, its location may present greater obstacles than that of other rooms.

It is important to note that neither the students in Chicago nor the fire services personnel in Baltimore felt that current school practices adequately prepare students for surviving a fire. While the caregivers in Chicago boasted their city's fire codes and the schools' rigorous fire drills, the other two segments expressed grave concern. Teenage students worried about mass panic and being trampled in the stampede to leave the building: fire services personnel claimed that school fire drills are infrequent and lax.

Protective Measures

Respondents felt their best means of protection were:

- ensuring that smoke detectors and fire extinguishers work properly
- being alert for signs of danger
- establishing and practicing escape plans and fire drills
- using the latest devices for child safety, such as smoke detectors and window stickers that identify a child's room
- discussing the need for fire safety practices with the neighbors

C. Current Messages and Materials about Fire Safety

Sources of Information

Parents volunteered that children learn about fire safety at school and through visits to fire stations. Many reported that their children take the information they receive seriously and frequently question their parents about the precautions they are taking.

Perceptions of the Media

The adult respondents feel that news broadcasts of fires help to remind them of the potential danger, and may supply them with some useful information on how to avoid fires. A few, however, perceived the news reports as having little or no value, and possibly being exploitative.

The adolescents and adults recalled animated commercials touting fire safety-- and Smokey the Bear, in particular. They felt the executions were helpful in reminding the viewer of the need for precautions and in offering safety tips.

The fire services personnel generally felt the news media did the communities a disservice, with the exception of alerting them to the availability of free smoke detectors. These respondents volunteered that the media could do much more in the way of informing the public (potential victims and onlookers) of the proper response to a fire.

D. Response to Messages about Bedroom Fire Safety

Of the nine messages shown primarily to parents (on following page), the ones rated the highest emphasized the importance of parental responsibility and the need for smoke detectors.

MESSAGES SHOWN PRIMARILY TO PARENTS

It is **my responsibility** as a parent to protect the safety of my children by teaching them about the dangers of playing with fire.

Every fire has a **cause**. By using proper fire safety, we can prevent or eliminate fires in the house. For example, smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the house, especially near sleeping areas.

Making our **sleep areas safe** from fire is an activity that can be done with the whole family. By including our children in the process, we can give them a better understanding of the dangers of fire and fire-safe practices. (Shown to Group 1 only)

A parent can **do a lot** to prevent children from being involved with fire. Children look to parents for guidance, leadership, and as a role model. (Shown to Groups 1, 3, 4, and 6)

Children, especially those ages five and under, are at the **greatest risk** from home-related death and injury. A less-acute perception of danger, less control over their environment, and a limited ability to react promptly and properly to a fire contribute to this increased risk. (Shown to Groups 1, 4, and 6)

Children under the age of five years old are too young to know **the difference** between right and wrong. Everything is a possible toy for them to play with and, consequently, they should be supervised at all times while playing. (Shown to Groups 1, 3, and 4)

Children are **naturally curious** about fire. We must take the mystery out of fire play by teaching children that fire is a tool, not a toy. (Shown to Groups 1, 4, and 6)

If I **allow** my children [a child] to light fires, I am responsible for the consequences of his or her actions. (Shown to Groups 1, 4, and 6)

If I prevent children from playing with fire, I can **save the lives** of the people I care about most.

Fires are very dangerous. More people die in fires than in hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and all other **natural disasters** combined. (Shown to Groups 2, 3, 4, and 6)

Parental Responses

- **My Responsibility**, **Allow, Save the Lives** and **Do a Lot** addressed parental duties in a clear and concise manner
- **Naturally Curious** was liked for its emphasis on and accurate depiction of children.
- **A Cause**, which focused on the need for smoke detectors, reinforced the parents' beliefs.
- There was overall agreement that the messages of **The Difference** and **Greatest Risk** were accurate and useful reminders.
- Virtually everyone who was exposed to **Natural Disasters** was surprised by the news, and deemed the message important and relevant.
- **Sleep Areas Safe** made reference to the need for fire safety and for teaching it to children.

MESSAGES SHOWN ONLY TO ADOLESCENTS

If I light a fire in my bedroom, all of my **favorite things** will be ruined.

If I light fires, I will **get in trouble**.

If I light a fire, I may **hurt or kill someone**, maybe a stranger, my friends, or even myself.

Even though I think I have it **under control**, open flames are dangerous and deadly in the areas where I sleep.

If I light a fire in my house, the **things my parents** worked so hard to get will be destroyed.

If I **saw my friends** with matches or lighters, I would tell them not to use them to play with fire.

I would ask my family to help me come up with **an escape plan** to get everyone out of the house, in case of a fire, if we didn't have one.

It is important for adults to **tell children why** they cannot use fire. Saying don't' is not good enough, because the child will not understand how dangerous fire is.

Parents should explain how and when fire should be used. If they do, children may understand the dangers of lighting fires. (Shown to Group 2 only)

Playing with fire in the bedroom is **something fun** I can do with friends.

When I was younger, **everything was a toy**. I was just curious. It's really difficult at that age to tell the difference between right and wrong. (Shown to Group 2 only)

Adolescent Responses

- There was almost universal agreement on the sentiments expressed in Tell Children Why and Parents Should Explain.
- The messages of Hurt or Kill and Under Control seemed to speak to the adolescents' awareness of the need for fire safety.
- Things My Parents struck a chord primarily with the adolescents in Chicago, who responded to it by noting that, not only would they lose their parents' trust, they would lose material comforts and possessions.
- As was true of the adults, these respondents strongly supported the concept of An Escape Plan.
- The adolescents in Baltimore found Saw My Friends particularly meaningful.
- There was a mixed response to Get In Trouble, Something Fun, and Everything Was A Toy.
- My Favorite Things was well received in Chicago, but not in Baltimore.

MESSAGES SHOWN ONLY TO FIRE SERVICES PERSONNEL

Young children should be **taught not to hide**, but to call for help immediately, if they see a fire starting.

You tell children to go to sleep at a decent hour, to eat their vegetables, and to exercise. You should also **tell them not to play with fire**. It's a simple message that can make the difference in keeping our children safe.

The community and fire service **must work together** to prevent juvenile fire starters, and insure the safety of everyone in the community.

I can **make my community safer** by encouraging individuals to practice safe fire-prevention habits.

It is important to **respond to the fire safety education needs** of our community. If the public cannot gain information about fire issues from their local fire agency, it is unlikely that they will find it offered anywhere else.

- Based on earlier discussions, it is likely that **Taught Not To Hide** addressed the respondents' concern that children would try to hide from a fire, rather than escape, and would hide from a uniformed fire officer due to fear.
- **Make My Community Safer** reflected the perceptions of the need for community involvement, and the frustrations of making it happen.
- **Tell Them Not To Play With Fire, Must Work Together** and **Respond To The Fire Safety Education Needs** all elicited a mixed response.

MESSAGES SHOWN ONLY TO CAREGIVERS

As an educator, I am in a position to recognize and address the problems of fires among those most at risk.

It is important to **respond to the fire safety needs of our students**. If children cannot gain information about fire issues from their teachers, it is unlikely that they will find it offered anywhere else.

It is **my responsibility** as an educator to protect the children under my supervision by teaching them about the dangers of playing with fire.

- As was true of the parents, the caregivers liked the straightforward reminder provided by **My Responsibility** and **As An Educator**.
- The educators had a mixed response to **Respond To The Fire Safety Education Needs**, as did the fire services personnel to their equivalent message.

E. Response to Textual Themes

After responding to the messages, the respondents were presented with a series of textual themes – 15 in Baltimore, and 12 in Chicago. They followed the same procedure for the messages. The themes will be discussed in the order of the respondents' preference. A straightforward approach seemed to work best, and references to bedroom fires were well received.

- **Learn Not to Burn** received uniformly high scores. Many recalled hearing it, and liked it for being a direct, easy-to-remember rhyme.
- **Wake Up to Fire Safety** also benefited from perceptions of it as being direct and relevant. “Wake up” was judged to have multiple meanings, be clever, and be closely associated with bedroom fires.
- **Don't Fool with Fire** was best liked by the parents in Chicago, but met with a lukewarm reception among the fire services personnel. Those who were favorably disposed credited it with carrying a clear, simple and appropriate message.
- There was an overall positive disposition towards the emphasis on personal responsibility in this theme.
- The adolescents in Baltimore were especially fond of this theme, which generally was well liked. The adolescents and parents termed it a good approach for kids.
- The **Too Smart to Start Fires** theme was popular with the adolescents in both markets, and with most of the adults. The fire services personnel and caregivers were somewhat less enthusiastic.
- The emphasis on sleeping and bedrooms elicited a largely favorable response, particularly among the adolescents in Baltimore and the parents in Chicago.
- **Fire Smarts is Hot Stuff** elicited a mixed response. While some liked the play on words, others favored a more direct approach.
- There was varying interpretations among the respondents to **Fire Spotters are Fire Stoppers**. Overall, the notion of taking an active role in fire prevention was applauded. However, some opinions varied on whether the “fire stopper” would be the “fire spotter” or a professional fire fighter. There was also some ambiguity regarding the appropriateness of encouraging children to stop fires, due to the fear that they would be encouraged to do so themselves.
- While not discussed in the groups, it is possible that **Fire Smart is Fire Power** lacked the directness appreciated by the respondents. The theme tended to receive a wide range of grades across all groups.

- Shown only in Baltimore, **Fire Spreads** received greater support from the parents and adolescents than it did from the fire services personnel. The theme may suffer from a lack of focus.
- **Spark Your Smarts** received far more bad grades than good. It was not discussed in the groups.
- **Fire Up Your Brain**, shown only in Baltimore, may have been regarded as too ambiguous.
- The respondents in Baltimore indicated relatively little interest in **Fire Away**.
- Based on earlier discussions, it seems probable that **Bedroom Fire Bugs** was rejected due to the negative connotations surrounding the term, “fire bugs”, often used by fire safety officials to connote fire offenders.

F. Response to Graphical Treatments

Group members were exposed to preliminary and “full-blown” graphical treatments for five themes. The discussions were structured like those for the messages and themes.

- The overall favorite was **Don't Fool**. Respondents viewed it to be colorful and “noticeable.”
- The graphical treatment for **Time** met with a positive reception because of the visual reminders of a child's bedroom and the time of day, as well as being colorful.
- **Too Smart** evoked a range of opinions regarding both the graphical treatment and the theme.
- Consistent with earlier reactions the concept of **Bedroom Fire Bugs** created an overall unfavorable impression.
- Many expressed concern in response to **Fire Spotters** that no “fire stoppers” were displayed.

G. Impressions of a Hangtag

The international “no” symbol hangtag clearly communicated the message of not playing with matches or fire. Respondent's felt it would be appropriate at a number of cites – though not necessarily useful on a mattress, where its visibility would be obscured.

H. Recommendations from the “Bedroom Fire Safety Commission”

At the end of the discussions, the group members were “appointed” members of the Bedroom Fire Safety Commission and asked to make recommendations for avoiding bedroom fires. Their response echoed the opinions and sentiments they had expressed earlier, focusing on an escape plan and preventive measures. Their suggestions included:

- prepare and practice a detailed escape plan to get out, stay out, and arrange a meeting place for family members
- make sure smoke detectors and fire extinguishers work properly
- educate children (and adults)
- keep matches out of the reach of children
- proper behavior when in a fire
- be mindful of fire hazards and smoking

III. DETAILED KEY FINDINGS

The following information is a detailed description of the results of the six focus groups conducted in Baltimore and Chicago. Respondent verbatims are noted by the group number, to identify the source. The group descriptions are:

City	Date	Time	Group	Type	# of respondents
Baltimore	10/5/99	12-2pm	1	Parents (8-11)	11
Baltimore	10/5/99	5:30-7:30pm	2	Adolescents	12
Baltimore	10/5/99	7-9pm	3	Fire Service Personnel	6
Chicago	10/7/99	12-2pm	4	Parents (3-7)	10
Chicago	10/7/99	5:30-7:30pm	5	Adolescents	9
Chicago	10/7/99	7-9pm	6	Caregivers	7

A. Knowledge of (Bedroom) Fire Safety

Each discussion began by presenting the words, “bedroom fire safety,” on an easel, and asking the respondents what the phrase brought to mind. There was a great deal of consistency across all six groups, as well as some notable differences. **Virtually all of the respondents mentioned smoke/fire detectors, “stop, drop, and roll,” and staying low to the ground in the presence of smoke.** Many expressed concern for children and other family members, friends, neighbors, and pets.

Many also commented on the need for **an escape plan and fire drills.** Respondents cited:

- a fire extinguisher
- a ladder
- telephoning 911 or another emergency number
- having a viable exit (i.e., no elevators, no bars on the windows, no locked doors)

Some of the adolescents in Baltimore spoke of tragedies and hazards, as well as “life and death” emergency situation, and being frightened. The fire services personnel went into greater detail:

- stay out of closets
- teach children not to be afraid of firemen
- always close doors/leave them closed
- do not panic
- put a towel out the window to signal that someone is in the room

Many spoke of precautionary measures, such as:

- not leaving children home alone
- instructing children in what to do
- checking ovens, stoves, fireplaces and space heaters
- making sure no candles are burning
- no smoking in the bedroom
- keeping matches and lighters from children
- checking for faulty wiring, overloaded sockets and frayed cords

The Most Important Issues

Respondents felt that having a working smoke/fire detector is the single most important issue. This was followed by a list of other considerations that would “enable you to survive,” such as fire extinguishers and a plan of escape. A great deal of attention was paid to “stop, drop and roll,” as well.

The parents of three to seven year olds in Chicago expressed a great deal of concern with vigilance than most of the other respondents, perhaps because of the age of their children. Some also mentioned the elderly.

“The first thing that comes to mind are kids, whether they got out of there...so the first thing you think of is kids, to make sure that their safety is involved.” 4

“They think of kids and the elderly, because kids can’t think for themselves, and the elderly can’t move as fast.” 4

B. Concerns about Fire Safety

Overall Concerns

Again, respondents stated the **need for children to know what to do and the necessity of having an escape plan.**

“Knowing that, for me, that the kids know what to do in case of a fire, anywhere: home, school, wherever they may be.” 1

Several worried about potential sources of a fire, such as a gas leak, chemicals stored in the house or garage, flammable clothing or bedding.

There was a great deal of concern over sleeping through a fire, and even through the sound of a smoke alarm. Some cited instances of doing so, or knowing someone who had.

“Where I stay, there was an alarm that went off one day. Everybody was outside. I didn’t hear it, because I work so much and I was just sound asleep. They said there were lights flashing in the hall and everything, and I didn’t hear nothing, believe me. I was asleep.” 1

“You’re working all that overtime and you’re sleeping too hard, you’re not hearing your surroundings.” 1

“[What concerns me is] going to sleep and the fire gets to you before you can wake up.” 5

“Smoke kills, and you may not wake up in time. It’s the fire smoke that kills.” 6

Many worried that the smoke detectors would not be in working order.

Worrisome Situations

Several stated that the bedroom posed potential hazards, for several reasons. They reiterated that sleep may be a factor, as would the amount of flammable materials kept in the bedroom. Some noted that bedrooms are often far away from a main exit, and/or on a second story or higher.

The kitchen and garage likewise were perceived to offer some dangers.

Despite the fact that the caregivers in Chicago believed their schools were quite safe, thanks to strict fire codes and rigorous fire drills at least weekly, the adolescents in that city perceived a school fire as being particularly threatening.

“If a fire breaks out at school, and, like, everybody is going to panic and you get run over.” 5

“Yeah, these little fire drills that we be having at school--I go to school with, like, 1,000 people, and come on now. As soon as you hear that fire bell and it’s a real fire, ain’t nobody going to go around in an orderly fashion or whatever.” 5

“If people are running through there like when you’ve got a change of classes, it’s already like crowded enough. So, if people running and trying to get out, people are going to be, you know, run over or stuff like that, trampled.” 5

Protective Measures

When asked about protective measures, the respondents largely repeated what they had described earlier. They emphasized:

- checking for potential signs of danger, such as inadequate wiring, gas leaks, and the careless use of matches and lighters.
- new products, such as a smoke detector which has a blinking light to alert the fire personnel, and special stickers for children’s windows
- practicing escape plans and fire drills
- making the neighbors aware of the need for fire safety
- keeping smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in good working order

C. Current Messages and Materials about Fire Safety

Sources of Information

Many of the parents noted that their children learn about fire safety in school and through visits to fire stations. They noted that the youngsters bring home literature, inspect their homes, and ask questions to ensure that they are safe.

One of the Chicago parents stated that she was a member of a Safety Team at work, which is in a downtown high-rise building.

The adolescents claimed to have learned about fire safety at school, from fire drills, in their “regular classes,” and from talks presented by firemen. Some of the respondents in Baltimore recalled seeing written messages to “learn not to burn” and signs to be “fire smart.”

Perceptions of the Media

The parents feel **news broadcasts of fires** help, in that the reports state how the fire started, remind them of the dangers and sometimes offer tips which could have prevented the fire or lessened the damage.

“After a crisis, then you see more about the fire departments giving out the smoke detectors and things of that nature.” 1

“The TV gets to more people and has the greatest impact.” 1

“They help by, like I said, telling you how the fire started. You don’t want to do the same mistakes.” 4

“I watch Channel Seven, and sometimes in the end they’ll tell you fire safety tips, what to do. They have a little thing on fire safety.” 4

Many of the adolescents spoke of the animated commercials about fire safety, which seemed to have a real effect on them. They mentioned Smokey the Bear (as did many adults), as well as McGruff the Dog and instructional commercials about “stop, drop, and roll.”

“They talk about Smokey the Bear and stuff, and show you how to put out the fire, if you’re in the forest and stuff.” 2

“It shows you what to do, if you’re in that situation.” 2

“If you don’t pay attention, it be coming on enough for you to sink into you anyway.” 2

“I guess [the best way] is them commercials, because, like, I guess most people are paying attention to the commercials when they come on. When they doing stuff, they watch it, I guess.” 5

Some parents expressed the opinion that more should be done before tragedy strikes.

“The media does build it up once the fire takes place and lives are lost, unfortunately. But it should be public awareness or public announcements every day with commercials that you should have safety consciousness.” 1

A member of Group 4 expressed the opinion that the media does more to exploit than to help the situation.

It seems like the media is just trying to find something to find a story. Instead of saying ‘this is how the fire started’ to help.” 4

The fire services personnel were highly critical of the media. Most maintained that “they never get it right,” and that they “sensationalize” the stories.

“One of the things that I’ve always had a problem with in the media, as far as reporting fires, is -- and these guys probably can attest to the same thing -- they interview somebody in the neighborhood, a next-door neighbor that witnessed the fire, and he says he kicked in the door and tried to get in, but he couldn’t get in. Nobody follows that up with, well, that’s not the right thing to do...there is a reason why it was all of a sudden full of fire: because you kicked the door in.” 5

They went on to complain that, if they make a comment, they are accused of “media bashing.”

One of the fire officials did state that Channel 2 (WMAR in Baltimore City) is a sponsor in their smoke detector program. Others complained, however, that the television stations report on the availability of free fire detectors from the fire houses, but never encourage the public to buy them, or inform them how little they cost.

Some fire service personnel commented that there is less publicity and fewer billboards because there are fewer fatalities. They attributed that to the smoke detector program and “a tremendous increase in public education.” They noted that the only posters they see are the ones they distribute, which are provided by the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) during October (fire prevention month).

D. Response to Messages about Bedroom Fire Safety

At this point in the discussions, the respondents were exposed to “messages” about fire safety and asked to complete a written exercise (ARSACE) indicating its:

- **Appropriateness**
- **Relevance**
- **Simplicity**
- **Ability to hold their interest**
- **Clarity**
- **Effectiveness of communication**

They were also asked to give it an overall grade from “A” to “F.” (See Appendix.)

The parents were exposed to nine messages. The adolescents in Baltimore saw twelve and those in Chicago saw nine. Eight were exposed to both the fire services personnel and the caregivers. Some of the messages overlapped from one segment to another.

Following is a list of messages which were exposed primarily to the parents (the exact groups to which they were shown is indicated). Some words will be shown in bold, so that the message may be referred to later in the report. Each message will then be addressed, in order of its popularity. Only the overall grade will be shown. It is indicative of the groups' overall perception and reaction to the message.

As noted earlier, the parents in Chicago--those with children aged three to seven--tended to react more strongly and more positively to these messages, on the whole, than did other respondents.

My Responsibility

It is **my responsibility** as a parent to protect the safety of my children by teaching them about the dangers of playing with fire.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	7	3	1	-	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	10	-	-	-	-

The parents volunteered that this message was clear and complete.

"It covers all these bases." 1

"It was clear, and it was precise. It just touched the human nature part." 1

"It's all about communication, you know. If you're communicating well, they're going to hear you." 1

"Protect the safety of the children, that's it. Whenever you're talking about fire, car accident, anything, it's my responsibility to cover that." 1

"Teaching begins at home all the time. You can't rely on teachers." 4

"You're actually their role model. They see you more than they see anybody else." 4

Naturally Curious

Children are **naturally curious** about fire. We must take the mystery out of fire play by teaching children that fire is a tool, not a toy.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	5	5	1	-	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	8	2	-	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	4	-	1	1	1

This was favored for its emphasis on children.

"Bottom line. First word, children." 1

"If you teach them that this is a tool it uses to heat up food and cook food. It's not just something that you ought to play with." 1

This was the third-favorite of the caregivers, although not all liked it.

“Short, sweet, and to-the-point.” 6

“A lot of kids actually are doing cooking, like hot dogs or something, so they’re going to be using it, so if we keep harping on it, it’s a tool, it’s not a toy, so use it for what you have to use it for. Otherwise, leave it alone.” 6

“I think it’s an adult thing. A tool, it’s a tool to an adult. I don’t think it should be a tool to a child.” 6

“It also depends on the age level.” 6

A Cause

Every fire has a **cause**. By using proper fire safety, we can prevent or eliminate fires in the house. For example, smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the house, especially near sleeping areas.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	5	4	2	-	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	9	1	-	-	-

The popularity of this statement was based largely on its emphasis on smoke alarms, which the respondents considered highly important.

“Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the home. That just expresses something to the common sense, you know what I’m saying? That’s why I liked it.” 1

“The most important thing is the lives and the prevention of fire.” 1

On the other hand, some felt the statement was too impersonal.

“That’s an insurance company slogan.” 1

“It has no personal sentiments in it at all.” 1

“I ain’t worried about the fire. The fire is not the important thing. It’s the lives, the prevention.” 1

Allow

If I **allow** my children [a child] to light fires, I am responsible for the consequences of his or her actions.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	3	3	1	2	2
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	10	-	-	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	1	-	4	-	2

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Save the Lives

If I prevent children from playing with fire, I can **save the lives** of the people I care about most.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	3	3	1	2	2
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	8	2	-	-	-

Both sets of parents volunteered that this statement appealed to them because it was straightforward and emphasized the role of the parent in fire safety.

"It's self-explanatory, basically." 4

"Common sense." 4

"Not only the teacher is a teacher. You're also a teacher, as a parent." 4

"Sometimes kids like to imitate their parents." 4

The Difference

Children under the age of five years old are too young to know **the difference** between right and wrong. Everything is a possible toy for them to play with and, consequently, they should be supervised at all times while playing.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	3	5	1	1	1
3 - Fire Service Personnel	-	1	1	3	1
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	3	1	4	1	1

While many agreed with the sentiment that children aged five and younger do not know the difference between right and wrong, some of the parents in Chicago disagreed. Others contended that it depends upon the child.

“My children are taught when they approach two and three years old how to prevent, what to call, 911. They were told what they need to do, if the door’s hot, not as hot, or if they smell smoke. So I wouldn’t think that of the child under the age of five, because they do know.” 4

“My four-year-old doesn’t know the actual concept of danger.” 4

“They’ll know the consequences of what could happen, if you tell them and you show them.” 4

Greatest Risk

Children, especially those ages five and under, are at the **greatest risk** from home-related death and injury. A less-acute perception of danger, less control over their environment, and a limited ability to react promptly and properly to a fire contribute to this increased risk.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 – Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	3	-	5	2	1
4 – Chicago, Parents (3-7)	8	-	1	-	1
6 – Chicago, Caregivers	1	1	3	2	-

Natural Disasters

Fires are very dangerous. More people die in fires than in hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and all other **natural disasters** combined.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 – Baltimore, Adolescents	5	4	2	1	-
3 – Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	3	1	1	1	-
4 – Chicago, Parents (3-7)	8	2	-	-	-
6 – Chicago, Caregivers	2	3	2	-	-

This message carried a great deal of weight with those to whom it was exposed. It clearly conveyed information which was both new and relevant, across several segments. The was the second-favorite statement of both the fire services personnel and the caregivers.

“The thing that caught me was that when they said that hurricanes or earthquakes and floods, because that be real major, too, and it would be on TV, and that would just get you, like fire, you know, more frequent than that, and that makes you think about it.” 2

“It catches their attention. It’s something that they see all the time, and they compare it. Like, a hurricane’s big to them, and earthquake’s big to them, and it puts it on the, you know, you see it on the news, and say fires kill more than this stuff that they say is so bad.” 3

"It gives you vision." 3

"They can relate." 3

"I like the fact that it's getting your attention by telling you how dangerous fire is, and how many people die because of fires, compared to natural disasters." 3

"It's scary." 6

"I think sometimes we don't realize in terms of statistics, and so I think that's catchy, because when you hear things like, oh, wow. It makes you stop and think. Boy, after all these earthquakes and things you've been hearing..." 6

"It's just an educational statement." 6

"It's very thought-provoking." 6

Do a Lot

A parent can **do a lot** to prevent children from being involved with fire. Children look to parents for guidance, leadership, and as a role model.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	4	6	1	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	4	1	-	-	1
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	1	-	-	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	2	2	2	1	-

The mention of being a role model was particularly impressive to many of these respondents. In fact, it was the favorite of the fire services personnel.

"Words don't help with kids. Action is what goes with kids, especially until they get at least eight or nine. Action is what they follow." 4

"They're very observant. Even if you think they're not watching, they're watching." 4

"Parents are the first line of defense." 3

"If the parent's not getting to them, then it makes it harder for us to get to them."
3

Sleep Areas Safe

Making our **sleep areas safe** from fire is an activity that can be done with the whole family. By including our children in the process, we can give them a better understanding of the dangers of fire and fire-safe practices.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	3	6	2	-	-

(Not discussed in the group)

Tell Children Why

It is important for adults to **tell children why** they cannot use fire. Saying don't is not good enough, because the child will not understand how dangerous fire is.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 – Baltimore, Adolescents	6	6	-	-	-
5 – Chicago, Adolescents	4	4	1	-	-

The adolescents in both Baltimore and Chicago agreed on the importance of explaining things to children--although they likely would not place themselves in that category.

“Saying don't is not like they is going to really listen, because I'm not going to lie. Since I remember, my mother telling me don't do something, and I still do it anyway, but if she come to me and explain why, then I probably, you know, listen to her, but just saying 'don't do that' is not going to make it.” 2

“Little kids' parents usually say 'don't, don't.' They pull the thing out and they say 'don't, and don't do it,' but there are a lot of kids that are curious or whatever, so sometimes you got to break down the consequences of it.” 5

Hurt or Kill

If I light a fire, I may **hurt or kill** someone, maybe a stranger, my friends, or even myself.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 – Baltimore, Adolescents	8	3	1	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	8	-	1	-	-

The adolescents responded to the clarity and directness of this message.

“It tells people what the fire can do to different people.” 2

“They need to know that they shouldn’t do that, because it could hurt them.” 2

“Nobody wants to kill themselves or anyone they know or their friends.” 5

“That would be on your conscience. You don’t want that.” 5

“[It will] haunt you, and you will go crazy for the rest of your life.” 5

Things My Parents

If I light a fire in my house, the **things my parents** worked so hard to get will be destroyed.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	4	3	4	1	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	8	1	-	-	-

The respondents in Chicago spoke of a fire destroying their own things and their parents' trust, as well as their parents' possessions.

"And you do want your parents to trust you with anything. So, by doing that, that would be stupid." 5

"Your parents don't trust you no more. They don't buy you stuff." 5

"And then no where to sleep--only on the ground, and then you got to sleep on the grass with the crickets." 5

An Escape Plan

I would ask my family to help me come up with **an escape plan** to get everyone out of the house, in case of a fire, if we didn't have one.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	7	3	1	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	3	2	3	1	-

This message reflected on how adolescents' feel about an escape plan, which they had discussed earlier. They felt that an escape plan would give them a feeling of control, and lessen the possibility that they would get confused, "scared," or panic.

"Even though if you don't have a fire, you'll be ready...it's better safe." 2

"Like, if a fire catch up, you don't know what's happening. I can get out of control and get real crazy. You don't know what to do, so you have a plan." 2

"Plus, if you have a plan, you can get out of the house faster." 2

Saw My Friends

If I **saw my friends** with matches or lighters, I would tell them not to use them to play with fire.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	7	2	2	1	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	4	2	3	-	-

There seemed to be an underlying fear among respondents that not all adolescents would recognize the danger of playing with fire. They mentioned burning leaves in a woody area, or setting off firecrackers.

“Well, your friends might not take it real serious, they think it’s fun, but it’s not, because it can get out of control. You can’t control it.” 2

“If your friend, like your friend could live next door to you, and if he set his house on fire, then your house going to catch on fire, too.” 2

Under Control

Even though I think I have it **under control**, open flames are dangerous and deadly in the areas where I sleep.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	6	4	2	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	3	2	3	1	-

Respondents in Baltimore cited several instances in which a fire could get out of control, including leaving burners or candles unattended, and not paying attention to something cooking while on the telephone.

Get in Trouble

If I light fires, I will **get in trouble**.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	3	4	2	3	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	1	3	4	1	-

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Favorite Things

If I light a fire in my bedroom, all of my **favorite things** will be ruined.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	-	-	6	4	2
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	3	4	2	-	-

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Something Fun

Playing with fire in the bedroom is **something fun** I can do with friends.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	-	-	1	2	9
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	1	3	1	2	2

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Parents Should Explain

Parents should explain how and when fire should be used. If they do, children may understand the dangers of lighting fires.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	3	3	1	2	1

(Not discussed in the group.)

Everything Was A Toy

When I was younger, **everything was a toy**. I was just curious. It's really difficult at that age to tell the difference between right and wrong.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	1	1	4	2	3

(Not discussed in the group.)

Taught Not To Hide

Young children should be **taught not to hide**, but to call for help immediately, if they see a fire starting.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	1	4	1	-	-

While this was not discussed during the group, the message reiterated what the fire services personnel had said earlier about children fearing a fireman in uniform, particularly in the midst of a fire.

Make My Community Safer

I can **make my community safer** by encouraging individuals to practice safe fire-prevention habits.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	5	-	1	-

These respondents spoke of their interest in getting the community involved in fire safety, but expressed the difficulty of doing so.

"We need as much help as we can get." 3

"We can't be the only ones out there that are trying to push this message." 3

"Once a year, we get help from the schools, but only during Fire Prevention Week." 3

"It's the same thing with fire drills, too. They don't take them seriously unless we're there, really, to be honest with you." 3

Tell Them Not To Play With Fire

You tell children to go to sleep at a decent hour, to eat their vegetables, and to exercise. You should also **tell them not to play with fire**. It's a simple message that can make the difference in keeping our children safe.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	1	2	1	1	1

(Not discussed in the group.)

Must Work Together

The community and fire service **must work together** to prevent juvenile fire starters, and insure the safety of everyone in the community.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	3	3	-	-

(Not discussed in the group.)

Respond To The Fire Safety Education Needs

It is important to **respond to the fire safety education needs** of our community. If the public cannot gain information about fire issues from their local fire agency, it is unlikely that they will find it offered anywhere else.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	2	2	2	-

(Not discussed in the group.)

My Responsibility

It is **my responsibility** as an educator to protect the children under my supervision by teaching them about the dangers of playing with fire.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	3	3	1	-	-

These caregivers exhibited a very real sense of responsibility for the children under their care. One teacher spoke of one of his students throwing a lit match at a girl's ear after returning from lighting incense at a funeral. He noted that students can regard candles as "a magical thing," and think of lighting them as an adult job to which they aspire. Another spoke of working with toddlers in this same regard. The consensus was that they must take their positions seriously.

"Parents entrust the safety of their children with us. They leave their children with us, so they're assuming that it is our children, as well, and we have to take care of them just like a parent does." 6

"This is an unwritten agreement. This is an assumed responsibility. They may not state it, but using common sense, that you have responsibility, just like the parents do for the children's safety." 6

As An Educator

As an educator, I am in a position to recognize and address the problems of fires among those most at risk.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	2	2	1	-	2

(Not discussed in the group.)

Respond To The Fire Safety Education Needs

It is important to **respond to the fire safety education needs** of our students. If children cannot gain information about fire issues from their teachers, it is unlikely that they will find it offered anywhere else.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	-	2	3	1	1

(Not discussed in the group.)

E. Response to Textual Themes

Following the discussion of the messages, the respondents were exposed to a set of themes (15 in Baltimore, and 12 in Chicago). They were asked to perform the same written exercise (see Appendix). Also, it was explained to the respondents how a theme summarizes the essence or serves as an umbrella for a campaign. They were asked to judge the themes in that context. What follows is a list of the themes, and a presentation of them according to preference.

THEMES

- **Time** to Stop Fires Where You Sleep.
- **Don't Fool** with Fire.
Smart kids for bedroom fire safety.
- **Too Smart** to Start Fires.
Smart kids for bedroom fire safety.
- **Bedroom Fire** Bugs.
Hot smarts for cool kids.
- **Fire Spotters** are Fire Stoppers.
Hot smarts for cool kids.
- **Fire Smarts** is Hot Stuff.
Smart kids for bedroom fire safety.
- **Fire Away.** (Groups 1-3 only)
Hot stuff about bedroom fire safety.
- **Fire Spreads.** (Groups 1-3 only)
Bedroom fire safety campaign.
- **Wake Up** to Fire Safety.
- **Spark** Your Smarts.
Kids IQ for bedroom fire safety.
- **Fire up** Your Brain. (Groups 1-3 only)
Kids get smart about bedroom fire safety.
- Fire Smart is **Fire Power.**
Fire Smart Kids for sleep safety.
- **Be Cool** About Fire Safety.
- **Learn** Not to Burn.
- **Fire Stops** with You.

Learn Not to Burn

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	4	6	-	-	1
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	9	1	2	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	5	1	-	-	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	6	3	-	-	1
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	5	3	-	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	4	1	1	-	1

Many recognized this theme, and appreciated it for being direct, easy to remember and in the form of a rhyme.

"It's something we've used for years, since I've been in the fire service." 3

"It's easy for a kid to remember, because it rhymes." 3

"Short and simple." 3

Wake Up to Fire Safety

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 – Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	7	1	-	-	3
2 – Baltimore, Adolescents	5	5	1	1	-
3 – Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	2	3	1	-	-
4 – Chicago, Parents (3-7)	7	2	1	-	-
5 – Chicago, Adolescents	3	3	3	-	-
6 – Chicago, Caregivers	3	4	-	-	-

Respondents appreciated the brevity, directness, multiple meanings, and association with bedroom fires.

"People are in denial about fire safety. Some people think that they don't have to worry about that. They're always like, you know, well, I don't have to worry about this...We have to train the kids." 4

"To me, it sets off an alarm...to me, wake up,' meaning look, snap out of it.'...it's the attention-getter." 4

"It's a reality check." 4

"It ties into the bedroom, which is the most dangerous place." 6

Don't Fool with Fire. Smart kids for bedroom fire safety.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 – Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	2	6	2	1	-
2 – Baltimore, Adolescents	5	4	3	-	-
3 – Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	4	1	2	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	10	-	-	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	4	2	2	1	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	6	1	-	-	-

This theme was credited with presenting a clear, simple message, which is appropriate for all.

"That's the clearest message." 4

"You mess with fire, you're going to get burned." 5

"Don't fool with fire, because you start burning up, and your whole body starts burning, and before you know, you get cremated." 5

"It reminded me of Smokey the Bear." 6

"I could see little kids, but I could see all ages relating to that." 6

Fire Stops with You

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	2	5	1	-	3
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	6	3	2	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	1	3	1	1	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	9	1	-	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	4	3	1	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	2	3	2	-	-

This was favored for its emphasis on personal responsibility, particularly by the parents in Chicago.

"It's another clear-cut one." It's like, okay, fire stops with you. Going back to I'm personally responsible, so it's something I can do." 4

"It puts the onus on you to stop the fire." 3

"The buck stops." 3

“Because fire stops with you. If it stops with you, you know not to set a fire at all. So you can’t start a fire.” 5

“If everybody is looking out and making sure everybody else is being safe, you know you have fire safety.” 5

Be Cool about Fire Safety

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	2	3	2	2	2
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	9	1	2	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	3	2	1	-	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	7	3	-	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	4	3	2	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	-	5	-	1	1

The adults maintained, and the adolescents confirmed, that kids want to “be cool.” It is a phrase they use, and a position to which they aspire.

“It’s a term kids are using now.” 3

“It’s important for them to be that. So, it’s used in something that they can relate to.” 3

“Our kids want to be cool.” 4

“Be cool about fire safety. I thought it was just simple.” 4

“Catchy.” 4

Too Smart to Start with Fires. Smart kids for bedroom fire safety.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	2	6	2	-	1
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	5	6	2	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	1	3	2	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	3	3	4	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	7	2	-	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	1	1	3	2	-

“When you’re little, your parents first start teaching about fire safety. If you keep that in your head for all your life, then you’d be smart enough not to start a fire, because you know what’s going to happen. But like you said, only stupid people start fires.” 5

Time to Stop Fires Where You Sleep

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	2	4	3	1	1
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	6	5	1	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	1	-	2	3	-
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	6	1	2	1	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	-	6	1	2	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	-	3	4	-	-

Respondents viewed this to be a reminder about the importance of ensuring fire safety overnight.

“It makes sense. It might catch on. Time to stop fires while you sleep.” 6

“Awareness of the bedroom.” 6

One caregiver argued, however, that it may frighten children.

“It could be scary for little kids. Where I sleep there could be a fire.” 6

Fire Smarts is Hot Stuff. Smart kids for bedroom fire safety.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 – Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	6	3	-	2	-
2 – Baltimore, Adolescents	4	5	3	-	-
3 – Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	1	2	2	1	-
4 – Chicago, Parents (3-7)	-	6	2	-	2
5 – Chicago, Adolescents	2	3	2	2	-
6 – Chicago, Caregivers	-	1	5	-	1

Several commented that “everybody likes to be smart.” Many praised the play on words, as well.

On the other hand, a mother in Baltimore expressed the opinion that some youngsters appreciate a more forthright approach.

“My older, my 21-year-old, will go for that cool, you know, that stuff, but my 10-year-old wouldn’t go for that...all that slang and stuff. I think kids today are taking things straightforward, like adults.” 1

Fire Spotters are Fire Stoppers. Hot smarts for cool kids.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	1	2	1	3	3
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	7	-	5	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	2	1	1	1	1
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	4	4	1	1	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	3	3	3	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	3	2	1	1	-

Many, including the adolescents in Baltimore, favored the notion of taking an active role in fire prevention.

“If you see a fire, you stomp it out.” 2

“If you see a fire, you can contact an older person or the fire department for them to help you out.” 2

“Or, you can see a fire and stop it before it spreads.” 2

Members of the fire services personnel tended to assume that the person spotting the fire would call for help (“letting us do it”). They generally agreed it would be a good theme for an older person, and for a billboard.

Caregivers, however, felt it was aimed more for younger children.

“I think for a little kid more. I wouldn’t use that in high school.” 6

“You’ll be laughed at.” 6

Fire Smart is Fire Power. Fire smart kids for sleep safety.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	-	2	6	1	2
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	4	4	4	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	3	1	-	2
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	4	3	1	1	1
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	4	2	1	2	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	1	-	3	3	-

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Fire Spreads. Bedroom fire safety campaign.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	5	1	2	1	2
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	7	3	2	-	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	1	2	1	-	2

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Spark Your Smarts. Kids’ IQ for bedroom fire safety.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	-	2	1	4	3
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	1	3	5	1	2
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	1	-	1	2	2
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	1	6	-	1	2
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	2	3	2	2	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	-	-	1	5	1

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Fire Up Your Brain. Kids get smart about bedroom fire safety.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	1	4	2	1	3
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	3	4	4	1	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	2	3	-	1

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Fire Away. Hot stuff about bedroom fire safety.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	-	3	3	2	3
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	-	1	7	2	1
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	1	1	1	3

(Not discussed in the groups.)

Bedroom Fire Bugs. Hot smarts for cool kids.

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	-	2	-	3	6
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	2	4	4	1	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	-	-	1	5
4 - Chicago, Parents (3-7)	-	1	5	2	2
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	1	1	4	2	1
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	-	-	1	2	4

(Not discussed in the groups.)

F. Response to Graphical Treatments

Respondents were asked to follow the same procedure for this part of the discussion. They were introduced to five themes, first accompanied by a visual “pre-treatment,” and then a “full-blown” graphical treatment. They were asked to complete a written exercise for the full-blown versions. (See Appendix.)

FULL-BLOWN GRAPHICAL THEMES

Don't Fool

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	6	3	2	-	-
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	6	3	2	1	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	2	3	-	1	-
4 - Chicago, Parent (3-7)	4	5	1	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	6	3	-	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	3	1	1	1	1

Time

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	2	6	1	1	1
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	6	3	1	1	1
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	3	2	1	-	-
4 - Chicago, Parent (3-7)	4	5	1	-	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	3	2	2	1	1
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	2	3	1	1	-

Too Smart

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	3	3	4	1	-
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	4	3	3	2	-
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	3	1	2	-
4 - Chicago, Parent (3-7)	1	4	4	1	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	6	1	2	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	-	4	1	2	-

Bedroom Fire Bug

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	2	6	1	1	1
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	4	3	3	1	1
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	-	2	1	3
4 - Chicago, Parent (3-7)	4	1	4	1	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	3	1	5	-	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	-	3	-	3	1

Fire Spotters

Group	A	B	C	D	F
1 - Baltimore, Parents (8-11)	-	1	5	3	2
2 - Baltimore, Adolescents	3	3	3	3	1
3 - Baltimore, Fire Service Personnel	-	2	2	1	1
4 - Chicago, Parent (3-7)	-	2	4	4	-
5 - Chicago, Adolescents	1	6	1	1	-
6 - Chicago, Caregivers	3	1	3	-	-

Don't Fool

This treatment proved to be the overall favorite. It was described as being colorful and “noticeable.” Those who liked it complimented the message and the tie-in with the jester’s hat.

Others complained that the picture did not tie in with the slogan, and/or that the presentation did not show the consequences of “fooling with fire.”

Time

Many warmed to the detail in this theme and to the depiction of a child’s room and teddy bear. The graphic was complimented for being colorful, and some responded positively to the clock (an alarm).

Too Smart

While some felt this communicated a positive message, others objected to the emphasis on the word, “smart.” They felt that it could either lead to a prideful attitude, or to low self-esteem.

Some found it to lack color.

Bedroom Fire Bugs

Criticism surrounding the negative overtones of “fire bugs” contributed to the relatively low rating given to this theme.

Fire Spotters

The primary complaint about this graphic was that it does not depict anyone taking action against a fire. Some also found it dull and lacking in detail.

G. Impressions of a Hangtag

Most felt that the international “no” symbol hangtag conveyed the message of not playing with matches or fire.

Respondents volunteered that they would expect to see it “everywhere”: in schools, on stoves, on a door knob, in the kitchen, on a book cover or book of matches, and in daycare and community buildings.

H. Recommendations from the “Bedroom Fire Safety Commission”

Towards the close of the sessions, the respondents were asked to assume the role of a member of the “Bedroom Fire Safety Commission”. They were given the task of recommending what can be done to avoid bedroom fires.

For the most part, the group members restated their earlier opinions, and focused chiefly on an escape plan and preventive measures. The recommendation of having an escape route or plan was mentioned in every group except the adolescent group. Respondents believe “prevention is key”, however, it is important to “pre-plan” in the event of a fire. Other recommendations cited repeatedly throughout the adult groups include: don’t play with matches, keep matches out of the reach of children, keep your smoke detector in working condition, get down and crawl if you encounter smoke, and make sure your children know their emergency numbers. The recommendations made by the adolescent group can best be summed up as *“don’t be careless with fire in your bedroom”*.

The fire safety professionals stressed “an overall approach” when offering recommendations as a commission. Their recommendations included what to do to prevent fires, as well as the proper way to behave during a fire. They reiterated the views of the other adult groups citing the need to properly store matches, routinely checking your smoke detector, and having an escape route that has been planned in advance.

Group One Baltimore- Parents of small children aged 8-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don’t leave matches laying around• Check smoke detectors• Have an Escape Plan• Talk to your neighbors about their fire habits - <i>“Fire prevention is a community thing”</i>
Group Two Baltimore- Adolescents 12-15 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don’t mess around with fire (e.g. experimenting with matches)• Don’t smoke in your bedroom• Don’t leave the iron on• Don’t put a light bulb next to clothes• Don’t have flammable stuff in your bedroom <i>“Too many wires cause fires.”</i>

<p>Group Three Baltimore - Fire Safety Professionals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't play with matches or lighters • Don't leave matches/lighters where kids can get to them • Check your smoke detector • Know emergency numbers • Have an escape plan - <i>"Have an escape plan with the details, the route of travel, and where you're going to meet."</i> • Crawl low under smoke • Feel door for heat before opening
<p>Group Four Chicago- Parent of Small children aged 3-7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency numbers - <i>"I put little red buttons on the phone so they know which ones to push."</i> • Prevention -Escape Plan/Fire Drill <i>"Even if you sit down and talk to your kids about an escape plan, that doesn't mean that they follow suit because you didn't practice getting out."</i> • Repetition in Song <i>"You know how Barney sings songs and the kids automatically know, like 'clean up, clean up'"</i>. • Have various fire extinguishers in different rooms • Fire alarms- <i>"A lot of people have them but they don't have batteries in it."</i>
<p>Group Five Chicago - Adolescents 12-15 years old</p>	<p>N/A - Not discussed with this group</p>
<p>Group Six Chicago - Caregivers [teachers and daycare providers]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an escape plan. <i>"You get out and then you call [911]."</i> • Wake everyone up • Stop, drop, and roll • Get low and crawl out • "Don't panic - <i>"You need to stay calm. If you over react, you create more problems."</i>

IV. SUMMARY

The objectives of the study were realized, in that the Sleep Products Safety Council and Ogilvy Public Relations obtained insights into the perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of parents, adolescents, fire services personnel and caregivers towards fire safety. In addition, the study provided insights into the following key issues:

- The impact of existing fire safety educational programs
- Which elements of the preliminary new campaign may be most effective

RIVA Market Research is pleased to serve as the research supplier for this qualitative study.

SUMMARIES OF FOUR CASE STUDIES

SPSC performed case study analysis of four successful fire-setter intervention programs. As described in the previous methodology section, SPSC selected the four programs out of a possible 20 U.S. programs based on geographic diversity and the success of the programs. The programs selected include those in Columbus, Ohio; Phoenix, Arizona; Portland, Oregon and Rochester, New York.

This section provides brief summaries of each of the four programs and the approaches they take to intervention. Following these descriptions, a grid presents a graphical comparison of the six key elements or attributes by which the programs were analyzed. The tabs immediately following this section then provide detailed program descriptions and documentation.

COLUMBUS

The City of Columbus, Ohio established a strong Juvenile Firesetter Program (JFP) to help prevent juvenile-related fires, as well as to provide intervention for juveniles who have a history of fireplay or firesetting. These goals are realized both in and out of the school classroom, and are facilitated by fire safety professionals, classroom educators, law enforcement representatives and various social agencies.

The program accomplishes its goals through five educational methods. It conducts Firesetting Evaluation Interviews for both children and parents, which are scheduled Monday-Saturday. Educational films and fire safety exercises are provided to further educate children and parents on this issue. For juveniles that have been exposed to firesetting behavior, have established a history of firesetting, or display tendencies towards such actions, referrals are made to the appropriate mental/social agencies. The program provides visits to Marion Correctional Institute to provide visual consequences for criminal behavior, encouraging behavioral modifications and increased understanding of fire safety issues. In order to demonstrate lessons learned by the program, and to allow the instructor to properly assess fire safety understanding, essays are required of the juveniles.

Fire Safety Educational Classes are held Monday-Saturday, and are divided into three age groups: 3-6 years old, 7-11 years old, and 12-17 years old, to provide more accurate and personalized education. For juveniles who may present problems in a group setting, individual one-on-one sessions are also offered.

The program's future goals are to establish a Mental Health Response Team for immediate counseling to victims of fire, as well as provide juveniles with the opportunity to work with fire safety professionals, to further educate, and perhaps instill an interest in fire safety work.

This program is currently on-hold, as it is being redesigned to capitalize on information gathered from research and developing trends in firesetting behavior in the Columbus area.

PHOENIX

Phoenix offers the Youth Firesetter Prevention Program (YFPP), which has become a necessary component of local fire safety education, as 50% of arsons in 1997 were committed by juveniles ages 8-18.

Youths demonstrating tendencies towards firesetting, or those with history of firesetting, can enter the program via parent or school intervention, referral by a fire investigator, or direct police/fire/other law agency referral.

Caseworkers then provide resources to families, such as educational fire safety classes, and behavioral health counselors. The program is composed of a number of groups and panels, each focusing on specific areas of fire safety, and firesetting concerns. This process is designed to allow the juvenile to receive the most appropriate counseling and educational referrals. A diversion program is offered at the Maricopa County (Arizona) Juvenile Court Center to show consequences of criminal acts. This service is followed by required classes and counseling sessions.

YFPP has become active in promoting interests throughout the Phoenix community, creating the Community Advisory Panel to raise awareness, increase funding, and establish community-wide support for preventive fire safety education.

PORTLAND

Portland Fire & Rescue has consistently updated its Juvenile Firesetter Program since its implementation 13 years ago. Through these refinements, the program has become “institutionalized” within the Portland Fire & Rescue system, and remains dedicated to identifying signs of firesetting behavior in youths, establishing factors that lead to such behavior, and providing education and/or referral services for children and families. Prevention of firesetting behavior is a primary focus of the program.

The Juvenile Firesetter Program is composed of six basic elements: Identification, education, interview, referral, follow-up and proaction. Each of these elements is broken down to cater to specific areas of concern, and contain various forms and letters to help assess each case on an individual basis. The answers given by parents and/or juveniles help the program appropriately handle each situation for the strongest possible results.

The program provides education for both children and parents, both to foster preventive measures, and to help families with firesetting problems. Using a variety of print and

video materials, along with the help of agencies and private companies, the Juvenile Firesetter Program has established a widespread educational standard for fire safety measures.

As the program continues to grow, Portland Fire & Rescue would like to expand firesetting education and counseling practices within school systems, alongside traditional fire safety training.

ROCHESTER

The City of Rochester Fire Department's Fire Related Youth (FRY) project has been operating since 1983, and has thoroughly investigated youth firesetting problems. The program has created strong relationships with agencies that are in touch with these juveniles, such as schools, caretakers, social service agencies, mental health counselors and local law enforcement agencies. It also receives help from private companies to fund and perform studies.

The FRY project is a unit of the Rochester Arson Investigation Unit, and consists of three full-time investigators that handle cases where juveniles are suspected of involvement. They interview suspects, family members, and persons close to the situation and/or subject to determine proper courses of action and education.

This project is dedicated to the education of youths that have displayed firesetting behavior and/or displayed tendencies towards such behavior. Through the interviewing process, these investigators establish individual case studies, and work towards showing trends and linked traits that may help in future education and prevention methods.

Using their own findings, as well as outside studies on firesetting behavior, the FRY project team has developed an extensive list of facts and trends within the scope of this problem, and a thorough list of procedures for efficient and accurate handling of each situation.

The FRY program has established strong follow-up practices to help determine which educational/preventive methods are effective, and which need to be refined.

COMPARISON CHART

	Community-based	Institutional	Consequence	Informational	Law Enforcement	Education/School	Fire Service	Community Organizations	Private Companies	Under 5	5-9	10-14	15-19	Print	Video	Education	Prevention	Parent	Child Interview	Counsel	Follow-up
Columbus, OH	√		√	√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	
Phoenix, AZ		√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	
Portland, OR	√		√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√
Rochester, NY		√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√

Campaign Comparison Chart

PROGRAM	BASIS	Messages	PARTNERS	AGE	CAMPAIGN MATERIALS	CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS
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Case Study Documentation

Descriptions of the intervention programs from each of the four cities is not available in electronic format. Copies of the materials are available in hard copy upon request. Contact NASFM at: P.O. Box 8778; Albany, NY 12208.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the SPSC analysis of existing intervention programs was to analyze the effectiveness of intervention messages, themes and programs in order to make recommendations for the design and implementation of future programs as well as the continuation of existing ones. The end product as presented here is recommendations regarding which themes and activities should be created or continued and which may need to be enhanced. Both the focus group research and the case study analysis were conducted to provide practical information for future programs such as SPSC's Phase II information and awareness campaign or NASFM's juvenile fire-setting intervention initiative.

The focus group research primarily provided a reality check of which messages and themes were most effective at cutting through the clutter to reach the targeted adolescent audience (and the those groups and individuals who will be delivering these messages) and then actually effecting this group's behaviors. Eight key areas were tested on the adolescents, parents, caregivers and fire services personnel, providing key findings for each area:

1. Knowledge of bedroom fire safety

Most respondents cited practical steps for maintaining bedroom fire safety and expressed concern for children and other family members, friends, neighbors and pets. This was especially true of parents with young children. The most frequently cited important fire safety measures were having a smoke detector in proper working order, having an escape plan and conducting fire drills. Members of the fire services were especially concerned with the need to educate children not to hide during a fire and not to fear uniformed fire fighters.

2. Concerns about fire safety

The fire fighters concern for educating small children was confirmed by parents' concern that their children know how to react in the event of a fire. Additionally, while not everyone knew that the bedroom was the site of the majority of fires or that most fires occur during the night, most did recognize potential hazards which could make the bedroom dangerous. This discussion led to many respondents expressing the fear of sleeping through fires. Finally, some adolescents and fire safety personnel were concerned that some schools have not adequately prepared students for surviving a fire.

3. Current messages and materials about fire safety

In general, this discussion confirmed that many fire safety messages are reaching the public, particularly children. Most parents believed that children learn about fire safety at school and through visits to fire stations. In addition, most believed that the public receives a lot of useful information about fire safety through the media, though several

believed media coverage could be exploitative or misleading. Respondents reported that children take the information they receive seriously.

4. Messages about bedroom fire safety

This section of the focus group identified which messages resonated best with each of the audiences. Overall, the messages that were perceived to be the most effective were those that assign responsibility for fire safety and those that provide practical advice how to prevent fires as well as how to react during a fire. Parents preferred messages that emphasized the importance of parental responsibility and the need for smoke detectors. Adolescents preferred the messages that spelled out the consequences of fires/fire-setting (e.g., loss of life, property, parental respect) and showed strong support for practical solutions such as having an escape plan. Echoing their earlier expressed concerns about small children, fire services personnel preferred messages that teach children not to hide. Fire services personnel also highly approved of messages stressing the need for community involvement in prevention and intervention strategies. Caregivers, like parents, also preferred messages that remind them of their responsibility – in this case, as educators.

5. Textual themes

In response to textual themes presented to them, focus groups preferred those that were straightforward and were receptive to those referring to bedroom fires. “Learn Not to Burn” and “Wake up to Fire Safety” were almost universally accepted by all groups. These messages were perceived to be direct, relevant and, especially in the case of “Learn Not to Burn,” easy to remember. Other messages elicited mixed responses or were perceived as effective by some groups but not others. For example, many parents and adolescents liked “Don’t Fool with Fire” and “Too Smart to Start Fires” because of their responsibility message and appeal to children, yet caregivers and fire services personnel were less favorably disposed.

In terms of bedroom fire safety, the groups ranked their favorite themes during a written exercise. The top three themes were: 1) Time to Stop Fires Where You Sleep; 2) Don’t Fool with Fire: Smart kids for bedroom fire safety; and 3) Too Smart to Start Fires: Smart kids for bedroom fire safety.

Graphical treatments

Group members responded to several preliminary and “full blown” graphical treatments for five themes. Of these, two were given an overall positive reception by all groups. The graphical treatment for “Don’t Fool with Fire” was well received because it was perceived as colorful and noticeable. In addition, many liked the tie-in between the use of a jester’s hat and the message itself. The groups also gave a positive reception to the graphical treatment for “Time to Stop Fires Where You Sleep” because of the detail in the depiction of a child’s room and the symbolic use of an alarm clock.

Impressions of a hangtag

Overall, respondents believed that the international “no” symbol hangtag conveyed the message of not playing with matches or fire. They also volunteered that they would expect to see it “everywhere” including in schools, on stoves, on door knobs, in the kitchen and in daycare and community buildings. However, many thought it would be less effective on mattresses because it would not be visible.

Recommendations from the “Bedroom Fire Safety Commission.”

When asked to make recommendations for avoiding bedroom fires, the focus groups restated their earlier sentiments. Most focused on preventative measures and pre-planning. The adolescent groups stressed the importance of not being careless in the bedroom, while the adults recommended escape plans, keeping matches away from children, maintaining working smoke detectors, how to act when encountering smoke, and knowing emergency numbers. Fire safety professionals stressed a comprehensive approach that included all of the measures.

Program elements

The four case studies from programs in Columbus, Phoenix, Portland and Rochester consistently identified positive attributes that contribute to the success of fire-setting intervention programs. In almost all cases, the four programs incorporated these attributes to some degree. The analysis looked at the institutional basis of the program, the program messages, partners, age of target audience, and campaign elements and materials. This analysis identified the common, positive attributes.

Whether the program was administered from a community- or an institutional basis did not seem to make a significant difference in effectiveness. This is because all of the programs SPSC examined incorporated partnerships to some degree with law enforcement, education, fire services and community organizations. Several also incorporated the private sector such as insurance companies. Therefore, community involvement was built into the programs whether institutionally or in practical implementation.

All the programs also deliver both consequential messages and informational/practical messages. Therefore, adolescents and children were able to see in relevant terms the consequences to themselves and others of the undesirable behavior of fire-setting and ways to prevent fires and promote fire safety. This strategy naturally flowed from the behavior modification model that all four programs employed.

The behavior modification model was likely successful in all four cases because the programs incorporated both educational aspects and counseling for at-risk youths. Additionally, the programs improve the likelihood of success of the educational and counseling components by maintaining a large degree of flexibility. For example, all programs recognized that some at-risk youth were not likely to perform well in group

settings, in these cases, individual educational and/or counseling sessions were conducted.

SPSC determined that another reason why the four programs are successful is because each incorporates a comprehensive referral system that relies on the cooperation of many community groups, agencies (law enforcement and fire services), schools and parents. In this way, the programs are able to identify not only those with a history of fire-setting, but also those who have been exposed to fire-setting activities by others and those who show tendencies toward the behavior, but have not acted on the inclination yet. In other words, the programs identify the potential problems before they are acted on in a dangerous way.

Finally, SPSC discovered that each of the programs is successful because they are both comprehensive and flexible in terms of the ages they target, the campaign elements and the campaign materials used. In all cases, the programs target all children from under five through adolescence. All programs also contain elements including education, prevention, parent interviews, child interviews, counseling and follow-up. In most cases, these elements can be mixed and match to fit the unique needs of at-risk youths. All programs also use multi-media to educate and reinforce the consequential and informational messages.

In summary, this report has identified those themes, messages and programs that are effective in juvenile fire-setter intervention programs. Messages that are practical, to-the-point, easy to remember and that clearly identify the responsibilities of juveniles, educators and parents are the most effective. From the programmatic standpoint, messages that convey both consequential themes and informational or practical themes were found to be most effective. Themes and graphics that adopt these characteristics and tie visuals to the messages were also found to be the most effective. These principles for messages and themes should be incorporated with programs that are flexible, comprehensive and include the participation of many community groups, agencies, schools and parents in activities encompassing both education and counseling.

The findings and recommendations presented in this report are the result of careful analysis of existing fire-setter intervention messages, themes and programs. The incorporation of these recommendations should help ensure that subsequent programs make a positive impact against the increasing trend in juvenile fire-setting.