



play safe! be safe!®



B U L L E T I N

January 2012



Did You Know?

Most burns associated with cooking equipment, cookware, and tableware are not caused by fire or flame. In 2009, ranges or ovens were involved in an estimated 17,300 thermal burn injuries seen in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. Microwaves are a leading cause of scald burns. Children under five face a higher risk of non-fire burns associated with cooking than of being burned in a cooking fire.

Source: NFPA

play safe! be safe!® Ambassadors

Participants in *play safe! be safe!*® Train-the-Trainer workshops are considered “ambassadors” who will in turn share the information presented by Dr. Robert Cole to teachers they train. Each participant can order up to a dozen *play safe! be safe!*® kits to distribute in their communities. *play safe! be safe!*® recently contacted a sampling of past workshop participants to see how this training plan is working.

Mary R. Voors is Children’s Services Manager at the Allen County Public Library, which has a main library and 13 branches. She attended a workshop in Fort Wayne, Ind., last year.

We generally hold monthly staff meetings attended by representatives from each branch. I presented the *play safe! be safe!*® program at our October meeting, which was perfect timing for Fire Prevention week. Participants were very appreciative of the kit.

The workshop information was so clear and well presented by Dr. Cole. It is perfect material for librarians to introduce into story time at the branches. Hundreds of children were taught the program. The kit games and information are used along with other fire-safety materials and appropriate reading books. These materials are available year-round.

In our community, we are lucky to have a Safety Village and a Survive Alive House staffed with firefighters who present developmentally appropriate information for the children. For instance, they will work with children to develop an escape plan. Between this type of program, what the kids learn in school and at the libraries, we are able to reinforce fire-safety messages numerous times throughout the year. I think libraries nationwide would love the *play safe! be safe!*® program.

Ariel Rainey is Director of Y Journeys at University of Maryland/Baltimore County in Baltimore, Maryland, and attended a workshop last spring in Baltimore.



Follow-up from the workshop was perfect timing because I was able to make the presentation using Dr. Cole's PowerPoint slides to our staff of teachers from eight of our centers, who in turn reach 60-110 students through various programs. Reaction from the staff was very positive. Many mentioned how pleased they were with the interactivity of the program, several mentioned how they appreciated the dual language, and all were planning on using the video.

I loved the workshop, and I used some of the same techniques that Dr. Cole used in my own presentation. I felt the information was so important that I also shared highlights with a parents' group I meet with once a month.

Like Dr. Cole, I began the session asking who knew someone who had been affected by fire. It's amazing how almost everyone had a family member or friend that had such an experience. Using this approach makes it real to the people you are speaking to and reminds them fire is not just something that happens to someone else's family. From there I could reinforce the easy changes we can make at home, e.g. hiding matches and lighters, changing smoke detector batteries, etc., to protect our children.



Lynn Deal is Director of the Belle Meade Children's Center in Nashville, Tenn., and attended a workshop in that city last spring.

I shared the *play safe! be safe!*® program with the teachers at our center and there's a kit in every classroom. Currently, we have 90, 2½-5 year olds at the Center who have gone through the *play safe! be safe!*® program. The teachers really got involved too. We had a fire at the Center a couple of years ago. Fortunately, it was small and contained, but it was a real eye-opener for me and the staff, so fire-safety is top of mind for us.



The children really got involved and teachers planned lots of activities, including having the children practice crawling low under smoke, using sheets to represent smoke. We also asked the children and their parents to have a fire drill at home. We guess that maybe half of the families actually had a drill, but most discussed a safe meeting place in the event of a fire.

The kids thought *play safe! be safe!*® was awesome and so did the parents. In September we had a parent orientation to explain what the children would be learning during the year. Fire prevention was part of the discussion and I engaged parents using the same questions that Dr. Cole used in his presentation. We also have a lending library. Parents can borrow the *play safe! be safe!*® kit to take home. In addition, we featured photos and videos of the kids participating in the *play safe! be safe!*® activities on our website, which the parents enjoyed watching.

We also had a visit from our local fire department. The kids had an opportunity to see a fire truck and the firefighters' equipment up close. What was amusing was that the kids wanted to know where firefighter Dan was, the character featured in the *play safe! be safe!*® video. They asked so many times that the visiting firefighters finally said; "Dan had the day off today!"

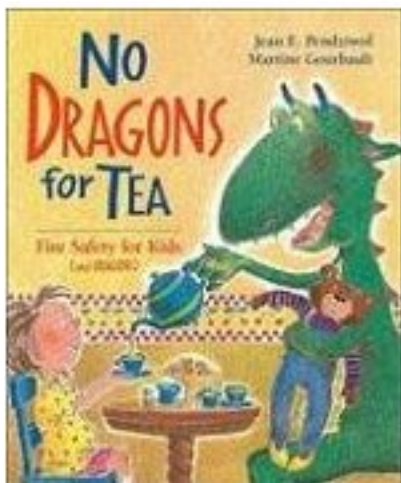
I also distributed kits to our local church for their Sunday school program and this spring we are going to team up with other centers to present the program again.

Catherine G. Proulx is a Volunteer Firefighter with the Mechanic Falls Fire Department in Maine who attended a workshop in 2006. Like many past participants, she continues to use and distribute play safe!® be safe! kits.

We distributed *play safe! be safe!*® kits to preschool teachers as well as to kindergarten, first and second grade teachers. The program is presented to all 135 children and the kits are available for use year-round.

As we have done in past years, we do follow-up visits to the school in February to determine what the children have learned and retained about their fire-safety lessons. We'll spend approximately 40 minutes in each class. Obviously, the teachers know when we are coming and coach the children, reinforcing key points of the program.

When we get there, the first question I ask is: "What do you know about fire?" and then the stories and fun begin. We hear everything from, "Mom burned the dinner and the smoke alarm went off" to what they have seen on television, plus many of the kids draw pictures which they present to us. We also have an Escape Plan Contest, and the class that comes up with the best plan gets a pizza party. In the end, all the kids get pizza, but the competition gets them energized.



At Halloween we open the fire station for trick or treat. Kids get to climb on the engines while the parents enjoy hot chocolate and donuts. Throughout the evening we play the *play safe! be safe!*® video.

We complement *play safe! be safe!*® program materials with videos and books to keep it interesting and fun. One of my favorite books to read to the children is *No Dragons for Tea* by Jean E. Pendziwol. It's a delightful story about a little girl who meets a dragon and brings him home for tea. Imagine her surprise when the dragon sneezes! Keeping these sessions as fun as possible helps the children to remember facts about fire safety. There are also four licensed daycare centers that I will visit and present the *play safe! be safe!*® program to in the coming months.

Ask Dr. Cole

In this month's column, Dr. Robert Cole discusses a topic that is often overlooked, yet is the most common cause of fires in the home.

Cooking was the cause of almost half (46%) of the residential building fires in 2009, according to FEMA and associate civilian injuries according to NFPA.

Further statistics from NFPA show that from 2004-2008 fire departments responded to an average of 155,000 home structure fires related to cooking equipment per year, resulting in 460 civilian fire deaths and 4,850 civilian fire injuries per year. Ranges were involved in three of every five home cooking fire incidents, and unattended cooking equipment was the leading factor contributing to home-cooking fires.

What's interesting is that city fire departments are getting fed up. Take Madison, Wisconsin as an example, where kitchen fires are the leading cause of fires. Before the holidays, city officials began discussing a city ordinance that would levy fines up to \$5,000 on "serious" fire offenders. While the ordinance is still under discussion in Madison, the topic is definitely a concern in cities.

The most vulnerable population, the most likely to die in kitchen fires, are young children and older adults, which is why it is important to emphasize safe kitchen practices in fire-safety lessons for children as well as adults. In the Family Fire Safety Reminders section of the *play safe! be safe!*® Teacher's Manual, we ask: "Do you practice kitchen safety?" As an addendum to that section, we suggest sending home NFPA's [kitchen safety tip sheet](#), which highlights key points, including:

- Keep a 3-foot kid-free zone around your cooking area.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- Stay alert! To prevent cooking fires, you have to be alert. You won't be if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol, or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy.
- Keep anything that can catch fire - potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels, or curtains - away from your stovetop.
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes into contact with a gas flame or electric burner.

Cold Weather Hazards

While kitchen fires are a leading cause of house fires, heating equipment-related fires are second, accounting for 18% of all reported home fires, are the leading cause of home fire deaths and the highest percentage of property damage. And it will come as no surprise that almost half of the heating equipment-related fires occur during January, February and March.

Here are some additional interesting statistics from a report entitled *Home Fires Involving Heating Equipment* compiled by John R. Hall, Jr. for NFPA.

In 2009, heating equipment was involved in an estimated:

- 58,900 reported home structure fires
- 480 civilian deaths
- 1,520 civilian injuries, and
- \$1.1 billion in direct property damage.

In 2005-2009, most home heating fire deaths (79%) and injuries (66%) and half (52%) of property damage involved stationary or portable space heaters. There is also increased concern about the use of fireplaces as a heat source, especially as gas prices have escalated. Fireplaces, chimney or chimney connectors account for fewer deaths but 37% of house fires within this category.

With the cold weather upon us, the key safety points to stress with children and their families, which are similar to those for the kitchen, are:

- Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from heating equipment, whether it's a space heater, fireplace or furnace.
- Have a three-foot "kid free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.

NFPA has a [Heating Safety](#) tip sheet which can be downloaded from their website.

2012 play safe! be safe!® Community & Train-the-Trainer Workshops

Following are the Community and Train-the-Trainer *play safe! be safe!*® workshops scheduled for this year. If you are interested in attending one of these sessions, contact the *play safe! be safe!*® office <http://workshops.playsafebesafe.com/contact/> for more details.

2/10/12	Austin, Texas
3/14/12	Honolulu, Hawaii
3/28/12	Loudon, Virginia
5/3/12	Topeka, Kansas
5/31/12	Cincinnati, Ohio
10/25/12	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
11/15/12	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania