

# play safe! be safe!®

## BULLETIN



**I**n this new column, the *play safe! be safe!® Bulletin* will interview individuals in the field of juvenile fire safety and preschool education. For our first Q&A session, we spoke with Captain Maria Figueroa with the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department in Florida. A firefighter for 21 years, Capt. Figueroa also serves as Community Education Director of the International Association of Hispanic Firefighters, a contract instructor for the National Fire Academy, and a consultant and trainer for the National Fire Prevention Association's (NFPA) Center for High Risk Outreach. In addition, she founded the Firesetters Intervention, Resources and Education (FIRE) Network program for Miami-Dade County. The program offers a well-rounded, whole community approach to address child fire play and juvenile firesetting behaviors centered on pre-event and post-event education and intervention. She held the title of Public Education Bureau Officer in charge of the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department for 5 years and was named the Florida Fire Safety Educator of the Year in 1997. Her experience also includes work with the older adults, people with disabilities, as well as children in the Hispanic community. Capt. Figueroa, together with Dr. Robert Cole, will present the first-ever Spanish language version of the *play safe! be safe!* workshop in Miami on November 6, 2004. (See *¡niños sequros! ¡niños contentos!*™)

**ps! bs!** Capt. Figueroa, you will be the first person to present the play safe! be safe! workshop entirely in Spanish. Based on your background, this would seem to be a perfect venue for you to reach a large audience.

**Capt. Figueroa.** I am especially pleased to premiere *¡niños sequros! ¡niños contentos!* in my hometown of Miami. The entire fire community is getting behind the



**Captain Maria Figueroa of the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department in Florida**

workshop programs, one of which also will be presented in English by Dr. Robert Cole. The Metro Dade Firefighter's Local donated its Union Hall for the site of the workshops and local and state officials are working to reach all licensed daycare facilities. My focus on high-risk populations has shown me how important it is to educate the preschool population through daycare providers, especially home-based programs.

**ps! bs!** On what do you base your concerns?

**Capt. Figueroa.** Studies reveal that 40% of kids stay in a family daycare environment. For Hispanic children that means they are more likely to only speak Spanish until they attend grammar school. Having these language-specific materials, such as the video, they are more likely to learn basic fire safety rules.

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## Fire Safety by the Season

**F**ire safety educators repeatedly stress the importance of integrating safety reminders into a child's curriculum year-round. What better opportunity than at the change of a season and during fall and winter holidays? Following are some timely fall/winter seasonal themes around which to re-introduce *play safe! be safe!* program components, such as *safe for play! keep away!*

### Daylight Savings Time—

Changing clocks is the perfect time to remind kids to have caregivers check smoke alarms and to change batteries.



**Candles**—In the past several years, the popularity of candles has grown tremendously. In addition to being the favorite topping for birthday cakes, candles have now become a home décor accessory being used for everything from air fresheners to trendy design elements.

In the fall or winter seasons, candles are used more frequently because of their association with certain holidays. What better time to re-introduce candle safety discussions than at Halloween, when kids are likely to see carved jack-o-lanterns with candles inside, or join with family or friends at family gatherings where candles are used as table decorations. These are the times when matches and lighters are more likely to be nearby.



### Fireplaces & Space Heaters—

As days get colder, children may be exposed to potential hazards from fireplaces and space heaters. Re-introducing lessons on things that are *safe for play!*, including discussions of matches and electric appliances, is timely. 🌸



## Up Close

continued from page 1

**ps! bs!** What is the biggest challenge in teaching fire safety to preschoolers?

**Capt. Figueroa.** Regardless of the language, it's keeping the kids' attention, that's the biggest challenge. Keeping them engaged and having fun is a prerequisite. That's why I'm so pleased with the components of *¡niños seguros!* *¡niños contentos!* The card games and storyboards are perfect. Kids love to be told stories and learn by playing.

**ps! bs!** Did you find the video translation accurate?

**Capt. Figueroa.** I was impressed with the excellent translation job that was done for the video. There are different words to refer to the same object in the Spanish-speaking countries, but the words that were selected are universal and easily understood by everyone and age appropriate.

**ps! bs!** Are there any specific suggestions you could share with educators about the Hispanic community?

**Capt. Figueroa.** In the Hispanic community, grandma plays a big part and there can be up to three generations living together, so it's important to engage the entire family. I would urge educators to use 'send home' materials. Ask children to work with caregivers to develop a home exit plan and use the other specially prepared letters in the *¡niños seguros!* *¡niños contentos!* Teacher's Manual, which are also in Spanish. ❁

## Teaching Tip

The entire month of May is devoted to fire safety education at the Riverside Park Nursery School, a parent cooperative for preschoolers and toddlers based in Ottawa, Canada. Early childhood education specialist Janet Clayton, who has taught at the school for four years, explains: "The basis of our program is the *play safe! be safe!* kit. It's just perfect for our program because of its various components."

This year Janet Clayton, who prefers to be called by her first name, added another step to the school's fire safety program which the kids have loved and which other teachers could easily implement. Janet explains: "At the *play safe! be safe!* web site



Children from the Riverside Park Nursery School delight in playing with the *play safe! be safe!* magnets.

## Ask Dr. Cole



## Looking Back... Reaching Out

- ❁ 89 workshops presented
- ❁ 44 states + 16 Canadian cities
- ❁ 55,000+ *play safe! be safe!* kits distributed

We are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the *play safe! be safe!* program this year. What's most rewarding is to study the reach of this program, which we do in several ways. We have conducted 89 workshops in 44 states and 16 Canadian cities since the program's inception. Through July 2004, we have shipped 55,475 kits. This number includes prior workshops and the individual and bulk orders we received from various teachers, daycare providers, schools, fire departments, communities, etc.

We can conservatively estimate that we have reached more than 55,000 educators and firefighters.

We know from follow-up with workshop sites, fire safety educators and daycare providers that the kits are shared and reused. For instance, there may be one *play safe! be safe!* kit at a

single firehouse, but it is used repeatedly in different classrooms or schools. Similarly, teachers working in a program or school also share and reuse kits. We estimate that on average, a kit is in circulation for 5 years.

In addition, in 2003, Fireproof Children conducted Federal Emergency Management Agency-sponsored "train the trainer" programs for 129 Head Start Program/Health Managers. These managers in turn trained 1,929 classroom teachers, to whom we also provided *play safe! be safe!* kits.

To estimate the exact number of children and families that have been reached by the program is difficult because class size varies widely. However, if we take conservative averages, for instance that the average classroom has 12 children and a kit is used for three years, then we might say we have reached 1,980,000 children (55,000 x 3 years x 12 children).

While we will never know the exact number of children and families, we are very proud of the scope of *play safe! be safe!* Our goal is to continue to expand the program's reach to every state. Along with the introduction of the Spanish version of the video (see story page 1) and Fireproof Children's FEMA grants, we hope to triple those statistics in the next ten years. ❁

visit  
[www.playsafebesafe.com](http://www.playsafebesafe.com)

([www.playsafebesafe.com](http://www.playsafebesafe.com)), I downloaded and printed pictures of the storyboards. I numbered each one to correspond to the large cards. Then I laminated the print-outs, cut them out and affixed magnets to the back."

Janet uses these magnets in a couple of ways. At circle time she places the magnets on the floor. She holds up the big cards from the kit and asks questions using the prompts on the back. "Each child has a turn to discuss the picture on the big card, matching the smaller magnetic card with the larger card, and placing it on the magnetic board. With each turn that child not only learns about fire safety, he or she also learns to match big pictures with smaller ones, number recognition and story sequencing." She also leaves the

magnets out during playtime because the children enjoy telling fire safety stories.

Janet thought of the magnets when the children had difficulty

adhering pieces to a felt board. "There's just something about magnets that kids love," she says, "and you can find magnetized sheets which are easy to cut and stick."

Throughout the month, Riverside Park teachers integrate fire safety education in every aspect of the children's day. Even in outdoor play, kids have great fun stopping, dropping and rolling down a gentle hill behind the school. At the end of May, a local firefighter visits the school. Once a month the school has a fire drill and teachers take the opportunity to reinforce basic fire safety tips, e.g., designated meeting place, dialing 911, etc.

The school has one toddler group and the *play safe! be safe!* curriculum has been introduced to the 18 month to 2½-year-olds this year. "Even the younger children love it. With toddlers we have the potential of having the children for three years and reinforcing fire safety messages even more," says Janet.


Her next idea: Velcro® sequencing puzzles. We'll keep you posted! ❁



# Fireproof Children Receives Second FEMA Grant

To address the need for fire prevention education designed for young children, Fireproof Children/Prevention First, administrators of the *play safe! be safe!* program, has received a \$717,584 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency/Department of Homeland Security to expand its program: Prevention First, Fire Safety Education for Preschool Children and Families.

The grant will be used to expand "train the trainer" workshops for preschool directors and teachers in states with high rates of fire-related deaths and injuries for children. States targeted for 2004 include: Arkansas, Illinois, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.


The framework for the training will be the award-winning preschool program *play safe! be safe!* BIC is donating nearly 4,000 kits for use in classrooms. Family activities will bring home specific safety messages, including the importance of developing and practicing home exit drills, having a working smoke detector, and keeping matches and lighters out of children's sight and reach. The program is expected to reach 126,000 families in one year. 

## play safe! be safe! BULLETIN • FALL 2004

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For *play safe! be safe!* workshop information or to order a kit (\$12/U.S. and \$19/Canadian), please contact: *play safe! be safe!*, 1 Grove St., Suite 235, Pittsford, N.Y. 14534 585-385-3370 [playsafe@fireproofchildren.com](mailto:playsafe@fireproofchildren.com) [www.playsafebesafe.com](http://www.playsafebesafe.com)

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**Teacher's Note:** *Hero Speaks* will be a regular addition to the *Bulletin*. Designed as a cutout, *Hero Speaks* is an ideal coloring project, which reinforces key fire safety tips presented in the *play safe! be safe!* program. Children should be encouraged to take the picture home to share with caregivers. 



Tell a grown-up when you find lighters/ matches and ask them to put them away



# Hero Speaks!

# Test Your Smoke Alarms

Fire Prevention Week • October 3–9, 2004



**A**n untested smoke alarm can be deadly. According to the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week, approximately 70% of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. That's the reason they selected "Test Your Smoke Alarms" for the theme of this year's annual safety campaign.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of having a working smoke alarm, NFPA is stressing that all family members should be familiar with the sound of the alarm and know what to do when they hear the alarm. For educators, NFPA has once again prepared helpful classroom materials, which can be downloaded from its web site:

[www.nfpa.org/FPW/About\\_Fire\\_Prevention\\_Week/about\\_fire\\_prevention\\_week.asp](http://www.nfpa.org/FPW/About_Fire_Prevention_Week/about_fire_prevention_week.asp)

Included in the kit is a caregiver letter and lesson plans. ❁

Logo reproduced from NFPA's Fire Prevention Week web site. ©2004 NFPA



During the recent *play safe! be safe!* workshop in Raleigh, NC, Dr. Robert Cole had an opportunity to show several area preschoolers how to play the *keep away! safe for play!* sticker game.



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## Upcoming *play safe! be safe!* Workshops

### **Miami, Florida**

November 5, 2004 (English)

November 6, 2004 (Spanish)

Metro Dade Firefighter's Local 1403 Union Hall

### **St Louis, Missouri**

November 13, 2004

St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley

Student Center

### **Detroit, Michigan**

December 10, 2004

Head Start Family Service Center



- Up Close Interview with Capt. Maria Figueroa
- Seasonal Fire Safety Hints
- 10th Anniversary Celebration
- Fire Safety Fun with Magnets
- HERO SPEAKS — Outout for the classroom

## Did You Know?

Children, some as young as **2 years old**, start more than **71,000 fires** every year, causing an average of **\$245 million** in property damage, **2,100 injuries**, and **250 deaths**.



## ¡niños seguros! ¡niños contentos!™

**T**he *play safe! be safe!*® video is now available in Spanish. The English and Spanish versions have been edited onto one tape, making the *play safe! be safe!* kit bi-lingual (see *play safe! be safe! Bulletin*, Spring '04). To order a kit, go to the "contact us" section of the website, [www.playsafebesafe.com](http://www.playsafebesafe.com) or call 585-385-3370. ❁

