

# play safe! be safe!®



## BULLETIN

### TRUE STORIES

## play safe! be safe! Works!

**J**udy Butler, Early Childhood Education Manager for Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start, McKenzie, Tenn., participated in a *play safe! be safe!* training session in Nashville, Tenn. She provided the curriculum and the training to center coordinators in her region who then trained teachers at 26 sites.

"We continue to incorporate the lessons into our curriculum on a regular basis," explains Butler. "We also provide the training to all of our parents. Of course, we always question if the lessons we teach are really getting across to the children, which is why I so enjoyed the following story from Chanesia Dixon. Dixon is Center Coordinator for Dyer County Central Head Start in Dyersburg, Tenn. Her daughter Nyha is a student in the Lauderdale County Head Start Program in Ripley, Tenn., one of the programs reached through the *play safe! be safe!* training." Here's Dixon's story:

"Nyha and I were in the kitchen yesterday. I went into the drawer to get out the lighter to light the candle that sits on our kitchen table. The phone rang immediately after I lit the candle, so I placed the lighter on the table and proceeded to answer

cont. on p. 3



## Tennessee Focuses on Fire Safety Education

### Two-day program combines play safe! be safe! and Risk Watch™ Programs

**W**ith the introduction of the *play safe! be safe! Train-the-Trainer* workshop model last year, Dr. Robert Cole and his staff have identified key groups of educators who reach a large community of child-care providers. Tennessee is a good case in point and was the site for a recent Train-the-Trainer workshop that ultimately reached 1,400 child care providers and more than 16,000 children.

Tennessee has a statewide Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) system with 11 CCR&R sites. These sites provide training and resources to all early childhood programs throughout the state, including preschool programs, Head Start, and family, group and center-based early childhood child-care providers. The staff at the 11 sites, which include a site coordinator, resource and referral specialists,



Dr. Robert Cole is joined by Elaine Piper (center) and Mary Lou Ott at the recent Chattanooga workshop.

and a health care consultant, must attend quarterly, mandatory two-day training programs.

"I was impressed with the organization of the Tennessee network as well as with the fact that CCR&R devoted most of its two-day, in-service training sessions to fire and related home safety issues," commented Dr. Cole. "They combined BIC's *play safe! be safe!* program on the first day with the *Risk Watch* program, which covers fire and other home safety risks, on the second. They are complementary programs, providing trainers with a broad array of materials with which to teach fire and home safety to preschoolers and older children."

Barbara West Wall, CCR&R's statewide coordinator; Elaine Piper, the state's Family Child Care Coordinator; and Mary Lou Ott, Program Coordinator for the South Central Tennessee region, recently discussed the *play safe! be safe!/Risk Watch* program. "It was a lucky combination of events," explains West Wall. "We received the BIC community grant for the *play safe! be safe!* workshop and, at about the same time, a grant

from FEMA to present *Risk Watch*. We recognized that both programs offered different educational components to assist us in teaching important safety messages."

cont. on p. 2

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Tennessee Focuses on Fire Safety Education *cont. from p. 1*



The two-day Tennessee workshop combined *play safe! be safe!* and *Risk Watch*. Mary Lou Ott explained how to effectively use *Risk Watch*'s Hazard House.

Ott, who was a prime organizer of the two-day workshop, emphasized: "We are becoming increasingly aware that fire and home safety concepts need to be taught year-round, not just in October. They have to be reintroduced frequently and in different ways. The *play safe! be safe!* kit offers varied games and a video, which child care providers love," continued Ott. "They use the kit with children and with parents. Coupled with *Risk Watch* materials, such as Sparky's Hazard House, we now have a variety of effective teaching tools."

For West Wall, both programs were also complementary to CCR&R goals. "We stress training and consistency in

our programs," she explained. "Content that we present to our trainers at in-service sessions must be conveyed effectively to individual child-care providers statewide. In order to do that we must have a well-trained staff who are equipped with the proper teaching resources. The *play safe! be safe!* workshop provided us with both," concludes West Wall. (Workshop participants received additional *play safe! be safe!* kits to distribute to their centers.) All child-care providers who attend a local training session receive certificates and the hours count toward the mandated hours required for licensing renewal.

From the 11 regional sites, coordinators, like Mary Lou Ott, conduct training sessions. Ott, for example, is responsible for 13 counties in her region. Working with Ott are four resource and referral specialists and one health specialist. "We provide all types of services, lend books and supply teaching aids. We organize materials into what we call Prop Boxes," explains Ott. "Regional CCR&R sites may have anywhere from 50 to 100 Prop Boxes, which they rotate to centers and maintain." The fire safety materials from the recent workshop were organized into a Prop Box.

Dr. Cole's workshop was the first video conferencing program offered by CCR&R and management was very pleased with this first effort. Elaine Piper pointed out, "Video conferencing requires some reorientation. There was a great deal of pre-planning required. Local facilitators had to be trained. They needed to be well versed in the information that was being presented beforehand so they could answer questions, plus they had to be taught how to encourage participation and group discussion," noted Piper.

Tennessee's CCR&R team agreed with previous *play safe! be safe!* sponsors who had used video conferencing that the benefits were huge. For staff, it means less traveling, less time away and reduced expenses. Most importantly, it means additional staff members have an opportunity to participate. ❁

European Union Adopts Child-Resistant Lighter Standard

On February 9, 2006, the 25 Member States of the European Union approved the decision to require that all lighters sold in the European Union be "child-resistant". Beginning February 15, 2007, manufacturers will no longer be allowed to sell lighters in Europe that are not "child-resistant." Retailers will then have an additional 12 months to sell through lighters in their inventory. Thereafter, the European consumer will not be able to buy a non child-resistant lighter. This decision follows child-resistant standards already adopted in the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The EU noted that in the U.S., legislation has been in effect since 1994, which only allows child-resistant disposable lighters to be sold. This law has led to a 60% reduction in fires, injuries and deaths due to young children playing with lighters. Customs and surveillance authorities are to work together to ensure that the decision is enforced. ❁

Ask Dr. Cole



Putting Away Lighters & Matches... Does It Matter?

As an educator and scientist, I continually challenge the basic concepts we teach in fire safety. Are they still relevant; is there newer data to take into account, and do they really work?

One of the most common principles we teach is that putting away matches and lighters prevents fires. During my travels over the past couple of years, I have informally surveyed fire safety educators asking if they felt storing matches and lighters was a deterrent to children starting fires.

Overwhelmingly, they still concur there is a linkage. Putting away lighters and matches removes opportunities for children to start fires. Research data from a school survey I conducted at the University of Rochester with the Rochester city school district and subsequently replicated state wide in Oregon and in British Columbia supports that conclusion as well. Most child-related fires are unintentional. The majority of children involved in starting fires do not intend any harm. If they see matches or lighters out on a table, they are likely to pick them up and play with them. Putting them away makes a difference. Most children will not seek out properly stored matches and lighters, but may well pick up and play with those they find lying around.

It is very common for adults to collect matchbooks from local restaurants or when they travel. When they get home, the matchbooks are thrown in a drawer. I recommend that parents stop collecting matchbooks and buy a child-resistant lighter and always store it in a place that is out of reach to children. Eliminating extra sources of ignition goes a long way to prevent the curious child from getting into trouble.

I urge you to continue to stress this basic fire-safety tenet with adults and children. People have to understand that this is a very simple fire-safety rule that works and can save lives. ❁

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**TRUE STORIES**

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the phone. As I turned to get the phone from the wall, Nyha yelled: 'Mom! No! You are supposed to put that away. Mom, put that away; that is for adults.' I forgot the phone as I looked at her standing there with her hands on her hips and I said: 'Yes Nyha, you are right. Mommy will put it away.' I placed it back in the drawer as she observed me. I then praised her for helping Mommy to remember what to do. Then I listened as she lectured me on fire safety for about 10 minutes!"

**Don't be embarrassed when it comes to fire safety!**

**Susan Koppel**, a member of the Manitoba Child Care Association, attended Dr. Cole's recent workshop in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She shared this true story.

"It was an excellent workshop and part of the time was spent with child-care providers sharing experiences both as professionals and as parents. One mom mentioned how her two children were going to a sleepover and despite being embarrassed, she asked the host family if their smoke detectors were working. The host checked them and the batteries were dead.

A few days later I read the story in the newspaper about a tragedy in Quebec. A mom and 8-year-old son died in a fire in their home. The boy had 2 brothers over for a sleepover. They both died, too (ages 11 and 6). I went cold when I thought about that mom at the workshop saying she felt uncomfortable asking her kids' friend's parents to check the smoke detector, but she could save their lives one day. We should all take note!"

Koppel went on to thank Dr. Cole for a great workshop and also mentioned: "We were given the fire safety kit as a gift at the workshop. I already have one, so I am going to make my new one available to the parents of the children I care for to take home on a rotation basis so they can continue, at home, the lessons the kids learn at daycare. My daycare parents think it's a great idea." ❀



**Popular Fire Safety Books**

From time to time, we share lists of books that educators find helpful in reinforcing fire-safety lessons. Here is a list used by Mary Lou Ott, Program Coordinator for the South Central region of the Tennessee Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

*It's Time to Call 911* ..... Smart Kids Publishing  
*Stop Drop and Roll* by Margery Cuyler ..... Scholastic Publishing  
*Big Frank's Fire Truck* by Leslie McGuire ..... Random House Pictureback Book  
*Arthur's Fire Drill* by Marc Brown ..... Random House  
*Fireman Small* by Wong Herbert Yee ..... Houghton Mifflin Company  
*A Day with Firefighters* by Jan Kottke ..... Children's Press  
*Fire Safety* by Pati Myers Gross ..... Roo Publications  
*No Dragons for Tea—Fire Safety for Kids(and Dragons)* ..... Kids Can Press  
 by Jean E. Pendziwol and Martine Gourbault  
*All Aboard Fire Trucks* by Teddy Later ..... Grosset & Dunlap  
*Touch and Feel Fire Engine* ..... DK  
*Poinsettia and the Firefighters* by Felicia Bond ..... Scholastic Books

**Fire Safety for Special Needs Children**

**M**yra Merdian-Drake, Public Education Officer for Graham Fire & Rescue, Graham, Wash., has been using **play safe! be safe!** kits since 1995, the year she started in public education. While she is involved in a number of educational programs within her community, she spoke recently to



**play safe! be safe!** about her experiences when using the kit with special needs classes.

"I feel special needs children are a vulnerable and susceptible population, which is why I have always used components from **play safe! be safe!**

kits in these classes," pointed out Merdian-Drake. "The children respond well to the bright, colorful games in the kit and they all recognize fire engines and firefighters."

Continuing, she pointed out, "If they are not able to verbalize answers, they frequently can match cards and dress the firefighter. Plus, the video is easy for almost everyone to follow." Merdian-Drake concedes that it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of these

classes. "I'm not a psychologist," she says, "but as an educator I know that if you can engage a child, making a lesson fun, they are more likely to grasp concepts. The **play safe! be safe!** kit is easy to use, easy for the kids to see and enjoy."

Whether you are working with special needs or other preschool populations, Merdian-Drake pointed out the importance of reinforcing the fire safety message. She presents the materials, leaves a kit and then revisits the class to reintroduce the materials.

She also noted that, frequently, special needs classes will group children of various ages together. She has used the **play safe! be safe!** kit with children as old as 12 and 13 with great success.

To reinforce the **safe for play! keep away!** lesson, Merdian-Drake uses a tool kit that she takes to classes. In the kit she has real tools and toy look-alikes, including a screwdriver, hammer, and drill. There are also miscellaneous items such as a ball and flashlight. At the bottom, there's a lighter and matches. "I try to find colorful or novel matchbooks," says Merdian-Drake. "I want to make the point to the children that even though a match book looks like fun, it's still an adult tool that is dangerous."

Merdian-Drake plans to introduce the **play safe! be safe!** kit to another special needs group later this year called ASAP, Advocating for Students with Autism. "I'm not sure what the children's responses will be to the fire safety lessons, but the teachers are very excited. I'd be happy to share my observations with *Bulletin* readers," concludes Merdian-Drake. ❀

**play safe! be safe! BULLETIN • SPRING 2006**

The **play safe! be safe!** Bulletin is a newsletter dedicated to supporting those committed to fire safety education of young children. It is published by BIC Corporation. Contents ©2006 by BIC Corporation. Articles may be reprinted without written permission, but must include the following acknowledgement: "© BIC Corporation and Fireproof Children Company. Reprinted with permission."

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## play safe! be safe! Goal: Reach Every State

**B**IC Corporation, sponsor of the *play safe! be safe!* program, is close to achieving its goal to present at least one workshop in every state. At publication time, at least one

*play safe! be safe!* workshop has been scheduled or presented in 47 states and in the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico. The only states that remain are: Montana, Nebraska and New Hampshire. 🐾

**Maria Figueroa, captain in the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department in Florida, recently presented a *play safe! be safe!* Train-the-Trainer workshop in Puerto Rico, which was attended by more than 45 teachers, many of whom are Head Start trainers, and 12 fire department educators pictured below.**



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## Upcoming Workshops and Train-the-Trainer Sessions

### Beckley, W.Va.

June 7, 2006  
Statewide Head Start Train-the-Trainer Workshop

### Burlington, Vt.

August 25, 2006  
Community and Train-the-Trainer Workshops

### Greensboro, N.C.

September 14, 2006  
Train-the-Trainer Workshop

### Augusta, Maine

September 20, 2006  
Train-the-Trainer Workshop & Video conference



## Did You Know?

**C**hildren's fire play is the number one cause of fire-related deaths in children (35%) under the age of 5 in the U.S. It accounts for more deaths in this age group than heating, electrical, and smoking fires combined. 🐾