



# play safe! be safe!®



B U L L E T I N



## Louisiana Public Broadcasting Co-sponsors Workshop

*play safe! be safe!®* workshops have been sponsored by a wide variety of organizations, but the recent Baton Rouge workshop was the first time that a public broadcasting station was a co-sponsor. Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB), a statewide station, teamed up with the Baton Rouge Fire Department to present a Train-the-Trainer and Community Workshop to an audience of fire service educators and supervisors, Head Start teachers and early childhood educators.

Lenora Brown, coordinator for LPB's Read to Lead in Literacy program and the workshop, recently spoke to the *Bulletin* about her work and the recent workshop.

**Bulletin.** Is it unusual for a public broadcasting station to have an education department?

**Brown.** While stations may differ, all public broadcasting stations have education departments and/or persons with a mandate to reach out and provide educational opportunities in their communities.

**Bulletin.** What is your specific area of work?

**Brown.** My job is to focus on early childhood education – 0 to 8-years-old. At LPB our goal is to improve literacy and to help children read at a younger age. All of our programming is focused on skills that involve literacy: oral language that supports an understanding of print and skills that translate print to sound. I meet with teacher and parent groups statewide to educate them on how to use our programs to teach children. We demonstrate how to view the programs, how to read to children, and what questions and activities to engage them in after reading a book.

## Louisiana Public Broadcasting Co-sponsors Workshop (continued)

**Bulletin.** A frequent complaint we receive from early childhood educators is the difficulty they experience engaging parents in their children's education. Is that something you experience at LPB?

**Brown.** Reaching parents is one of our biggest challenges. So many parents work today that it is difficult to find a convenient time to meet. Parents of Head Start children must attend monthly meetings, so they are easier to reach. In other areas we reach out to parent associations, day care centers, and other organized groups.

**Bulletin.** How did your sponsorship of *play safe! be safe!* come about?

**Brown.** One of our children's programs, *Clifford the Big Red Dog™*, includes a component on fire safety, so it was a natural tie-in. We have handouts and a curriculum that we present to parents and educators. What is so helpful about *play safe! be safe!* is that the program complements ours. *play safe! be safe!* stands alone and can be added into existing programs.

**Bulletin.** What was the response to Dr. Cole's recent *play safe! be safe!* workshop here in Baton Rouge?

**Brown.** It was unbelievable. Firefighters from across Louisiana attended and commented on how pleased they were with Dr. Cole's presentation and the *play safe! be safe!* program. *play safe! be safe!* fits nicely into their existing school program and is a valuable teaching tool in its own right. Head Start teachers and early childhood educators were delighted to have a research-validated program. A part of the national evaluation for Head Start teachers focuses on teaching safety to children. *play safe! be safe!* answers that mandate perfectly. *play safe! be safe!* materials are valuable and additional resources.

### Ask Dr. Cole

In my January column, I emphasized how the *play safe! be safe!* kit makes it easy to integrate fire safety lessons into a curriculum because it supports the development of language and literature skills. I also emphasized the importance of using the tools in the kit, i.e., the games and video, year-round.

Be alert to what the Health Belief model calls "cues to action" to reintroduce fire safety lessons. Fire Prevention Week is the most obvious "cue" because the media focuses on it, as do most educators. But consider other cues as well. For instance, link program activities to holidays. In past *Bulletins*, we've written about seasonal cues such as discussing the use of candles at Halloween and Christmas or the dangers of fireworks around July 4th.

## **Ask Dr. Cole (continued)**

If your town is planning a special event such as a fair or program that attracts families, there's a good chance that safety education will be a part of the activities and offer an opportunity to tie in a class lesson. Of course, if a fire accident occurs in your community and it is widely covered in the media, it is an important time to reintroduce a lesson on working fire alarms and exit plans. These lessons can also help to alleviate some of the children's fears.

Finally, take advantage of open house events to engage the entire family. Position the *play safe! be safe!* activities around the room and ask the children to play the games with their parents. The children will enjoy teaching their parents and, hopefully, the adults will focus on the lessons and, in turn, emphasize fire safety lessons at home.

## **National Movement to Ban Toy-Like Lighters Grows**

In the January '08 *Bulletin*, we mentioned how a tragic fire in Arkansas involving two brothers and a toy-like lighter resulted in a number of Arkansas towns passing ordinances banning these lighters. Since that time, dozens of cities and towns are now considering bans. Maine is preparing to vote on a statewide ban, and the Lighter Association, the industry's trade group, came out in support of legislation banning toy-like lighters. In addition, the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) is drafting a strategic plan to address this issue on a national level.

Recent stories that appeared on the Associated Press wire service and in *USA Today*, along with those in local newspapers and on television, have helped to raise consumer awareness. Unfortunately, it isn't until many adults are fooled into buying a lighter thinking it is a toy that they focus on the issue. That's what happened to Laura Fowler from Beaverton, Mich.

Fowler's four-year-old daughter saw a rubberized Dalmatian dog near the checkout counter at a local store and asked her mother to buy it, which she did. It wasn't until Fowler was at home that she realized the dog was not a toy. Moving the firefighter's cap on the dog's head sent a flame shooting from its mouth. Fowler's response was understandable: "I was terrified. My daughter is four....toys are supposed to be toys and lighters are supposed to be lighters." Her experience was covered by the local television station, ABC12. The store is now considering removing toy-like lighters from their shelves.

If you want to get involved in this initiative or just keep up-to-date, visit the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal's web site:

[http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/Novelty\\_Toylike\\_Lighters.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/Novelty_Toylike_Lighters.shtml)

This office began the initiative to ban toy-like lighters two years ago, and continues to collect data from fire service personnel across the country about accidents related to these lighters, and to post cities and states that are considering legislation.

## **Reinforce Fire Safety Education through Fun Coloring Activity!**

Use a fun activity like coloring to reinforce fire safety and prevention messages with your class. Use the URL below to download a page for the children in your class to color and decide what color their fire truck will be!

[http://workshops.playsafebesafe.com/email/03.08/april\\_coloring\\_activity.pdf](http://workshops.playsafebesafe.com/email/03.08/april_coloring_activity.pdf)