



play safe! be safe!®



B U L L E T I N



FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION: *A Community Project*

In his column this month, Dr. Robert Cole talks about the potential of the *play safe! be safe!®* Train-the-Trainer Workshop to reach a greater number of teachers. Mary Ann Sanguinito is a good case in point of how this “multiplier-effect” can work. A participant in last year’s Sayreville, N.J. Train-the-Trainer Workshop, Sanguinito, a Master Teacher with the Phillipsburg School District's Early Childhood Program in Phillipsburg, N.J., conducted a professional development day for 58 preschool and kindergarten teachers and has more programs in the works. *ps! bs!* spoke to Sanguinito recently about her training initiatives.

ps! bs! What brought you to the Train-the-Trainer Workshop?

SANGUINITO. In my position as Master Teacher, I provide in-classroom support to help preschool teachers. I also assist the principal of the early childhood department with professional development, workshops, and curriculum implementation.

ps! bs! Did you feel you walked away with enough information to teach others?

SANGUINITO. The presentation was interesting and interactive. We had opportunities to share stories and ask questions. I learned things I did not know about fire-related injuries. The statistics are sobering. For example: “More than half of all children have played with fire by the time they are out of elementary school.” Dr. Cole also provided insights on how children view fire. The example of candles on a birthday cake is one that really had an impact on me – it’s our first experience with fire! Having all this information, his PowerPoint handout and the kits, I left the workshop ready to share this information with other teachers.

ps! bs! How did you plan your workshop?

FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION: A *Community Project* (continued)

SANGUINITO. We have a wonderful preschool program, which is free to the community because we are eligible for special state funding. I organized a half-day professional development program, following Dr. Cole's outline, sharing what I learned and reviewing the kit. Fifty-eight preschool and kindergarten teachers and aides, who in turn teach 605 children, attended the session. What's great about involving both preschool and kindergarten teachers is that the program is carried on to the kindergarten classroom as well.

play safe! be safe! will be implemented district-wide from mid-January through mid-February. Our fire chief was so enthusiastic about our program that he is working to get volunteer firefighters to go into each classroom for the "dress the firefighter" session, so the children can see firsthand what fire equipment looks like.

ps! bs! Do you have more programs in the works?

SANGUINITO. To successfully implement the preschool curriculum, I'm organizing a *play safe! be safe!* evening, involving parents, the Phillipsburg School District early childhood staff, district administrators, and the Phillipsburg Fire Department.

I plan to present the *play safe! be safe!* program to parents. In addition, we will have exhibitors talking about fire alarms, carbon monoxide monitors, and fire extinguishers. We'll be giving away free batteries to everyone and free smoke alarms for qualified families. Throughout the month, in addition to the actual *play safe! be safe!* program being taught, there will be a variety of activities. Each school will hold a contest to name their firefighter mascot. There will be "Dalmatian Days" during which the children will be involved in puppet-making activities. Plus, there will be special bulletin board displays and display windows created to promote fire safety education.

ps! bs! It sounds like you are committed to involve the entire community.

SANGUINITO. One of the benefits of living in a small town is that you can get the entire community involved, and I am so pleased that we have participation at every level. Our principal is committed to visiting each of the classrooms during this initiative, which will help validate the importance of the fire-safety message. The school superintendent is also getting behind this effort, as is the mayor. Phillipsburg's fire chief is recruiting volunteer firefighters to visit classrooms, and our local newspapers will be reporting on our fire safety education program.

Together we can really make a difference to keep families safe in our community. It's a win-win situation. I have a friend who lost her son in a fire last year because other young children were careless with a lighter. The loss had a tremendous impact on my family and me. I personally want to do everything that I can to see this doesn't happen to another family.

Ask Dr. Cole

TRAIN-THE-TRAINER WORKSHOPS: *Creating Community Partnerships*

This is the third year we have included a Train-the-Trainer component in the *play safe! be safe!®* workshops, and I thought it was a good time to review why we made this change. While not altering the basic content of the workshop or the primary audience (teachers, fire safety educators and daycare providers), we want to encourage trainers to attend and then support them in taking our safety message to their communities. Long after my workshop presentation is over, local trainers can continue to work with teachers and daycare providers to broaden the reach of the program and help us meet our ultimate goal: teaching fire safety to the greatest number of children possible.

The new components of the workshop are primarily about motivating better safety practices. It gives everyone who attends a workshop, trainer or not, ideas about how to motivate their colleagues to teach fire safety and parents to enhance their own home safety practices. I outline in detail the Health Belief Model, which I have discussed in past columns and is based on what motivates people to do the right thing. In addition, each trainer receives a copy of my slides and notes, and up to 12 additional *play safe! be safe!* kits to share locally.

We want trainers to reach the maximum number of educators in their communities and suggest forming partnerships as one means of accomplishing this mission. Mary Ann Sanguinito's interview in this issue of the *Bulletin* is illustrative of what can be done. We stress that our information can be combined with trainers' current curriculum in a variety of formats. For Sanguinito it was a traditional in-service training day specifically focused on *play safe! be safe!*, but programs can be presented in less formal settings, such as a series of brief lunchtime lectures.

We've made it easy to explain how children view fire, and the *play safe! be safe!* kit is a self-contained, ready-to-use classroom aid. Teaching fire safety to preschoolers can be a tremendous success.

UPDATE: Toy-Like Lighter Legislation

To date, Maine and Tennessee are the only states that have outlawed the sale of toy-like lighters, however, legislation is under consideration in other states.

Michigan has a bill, similar to the Maine law, pending before its state's Assembly. A news story about toy-like lighters, which aired on WEYI, an NBC affiliate in Michigan, has helped to raise awareness in the state.

UPDATE: Toy-Like Lighter Legislation (continued)

In New Jersey last fall, Assemblyman John Wisniewski introduced a bill before the Senate and General Assembly, which is pending. The wording in the bill states that the selling of “novelty” lighters intended for use by children 15 years of age or younger would be outlawed. The bill carries stiff penalties: “...a monetary penalty of not more than \$10,000 for a first offense and not more than \$20,000 for any subsequent offense. In addition, violations can result in cease and desist orders issued by the Attorney General, the assessment of punitive damages and the awarding of treble damages and cost to the injured party.”

In addition, on a national level, “Protect Children from Dangerous Lighters Act” legislation banning cigarette lighters constructed to look like toys or regular household items, is scheduled to be reintroduced in the U.S. Congress during the 2009 term. (This bill was originally introduced in the fall of 2008. Due to an unusually busy calendar and elections, it was never brought to the floor for discussion and vote. U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Chris Dodd (D-Conn) are expected to sponsor the bill again this year).

Meanwhile, towns across the country are either considering or enacting laws banning toy-like lighters. It’s “lights out” for novelty cigarette lighters in New London, Conn. The City Council recently approved an ordinance banning the sale of novelty lighters that resemble toys, guns or other weapons. Violators could face a \$100 fine. The ordinance, which went into effect in December, also bans people from giving the toy-like lighters as gifts within city limits.

Judy Okulitch, Program Analyst, Juvenile with Fire Intervention Program Office of Oregon State Fire Marshal, who has been instrumental in raising awareness of this issue nationally, recently received word from the Huber Heights Fire Department in Huber Heights, Ohio. They are beginning the process of introducing legislation that would ban toy-like lighters and hope to organize statewide support for a bill in Ohio.

UPCOMING 2009 WORKSHOPS

If you are interested in attending one of the following workshops, please e-mail or call Fireproof Children at info@fireproofchildren.com or (585) 264-0840. If you are interested in organizing a *play safe! be safe!* workshop in your city, please visit www.playsafebesafe.com for more details.

Springfield, Missouri – January 29, 2009
Community & Train-the-Trainer

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania – March 6, 2009
Community & Train-the-Trainer

Fresno, California – April 3, 2009
Community & Train-the-Trainer