



play safe! be safe!®



BULLETIN



play safe! be safe!@ Trainers **Spread the Word**

Participants in the *play safe! be safe!@* Train-the-Trainer workshops reach out to teachers in daycare centers and preschools in their communities. Here are two stories of how the program is working beyond our expectations.

A Collaborative Effort

Dianne VanHorn, Crime Prevention Specialist with the Marana Police Department, Marana, Ariz., attended a workshop in Tucson earlier this year. The Bulletin was surprised to see a "crime specialist" at the workshop, so we asked VanHorn about her interest. We discovered that her department was working in conjunction with Tucson's Northwest Fire District to train teachers in a variety of safety skills, including fire safety. We posed several questions to VanHorn and her counterpart at the fire department, Fire Safety Inspector Veronica Rubio, who also attended the workshop.



play safe! be safe!® Trainers Spread the Word (continued)

ps! bs!: Was this the first joint effort between Marana's police and Northwest Fire District? What was the rationale behind this joint effort, and how will you coordinate the *play safe! be safe!* program?

Rubio: Police and fire departments have always had one goal in common, to keep our communities safe. Usually, our safety messages follow traditional lines, i.e., police department with personal safety and fire department with fire safety. However, we are increasingly seeing that information being requested falls into both of our departments, and as a result one department could wind up using another's program or ideas. We also work very closely with each other regarding organizations to which we both belong. Living in the same community, we realized that having a joint partnership is that much more beneficial to everyone.

VanHorn: We join forces on several initiatives:
Participate in local community events and safety fairs. We coordinate what resources we will be presenting to offer a variety of services and not duplicate efforts.
Provide referrals for services that may be offered by another agency. Again showing partnership by knowing what is available to the entire community (e.g., CERT program, security surveys).

Collaborate on joint efforts via local Safe Kids Tucson coalitions with many agencies and private sector (health care) programs, sharing a unified message and effort focused on the good of the community. There is not the concern about giving credit to the agency that develops the program.

ps! bs!: Will you or have you planned specific training sessions for preschool teachers this next school year?

Rubio: Hopefully, we will be able to get together to do a small training program soon. Getting the kits to the teachers will be helpful in spreading the word about fire safety.

VanHorn: I don't know how likely an organized training session will be, but we plan to work together in contacting the local administrators and teachers for the centers in our area. We have also made a kit available through our local public library, should a home-based center be looking for resources.

ps! bs!: As a crime/fire prevention specialist, what is the biggest challenge (aside from too little time!) you face in teaching young children?

Rubio: Finding material that will stick in the kids' heads. In my experience, the more animated you are when teaching the lesson, the more they listen and the better they learn.

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VanHorn: When addressing young children who follow a public school schedule, I find that if materials meet state instruction standards in spelling, reading, and writing they are easier to integrate into the school day. The teachers are more likely to buy into the lesson plan since their time is limited.

ps! bs!: What are your thoughts about the workshop and the *play safe! be safe!* kit?

Rubio: I thought the workshop was great and the kit is awesome. I am excited about getting out into the community and using it.

VanHorn: Very age appropriate. I wish I had more “lessons” in this format. . . and FREE was great too! Thanks, BIC!

An Eye-Opening Experience

Dr. Connie Smith attended the Train-the-Trainer workshop held in Middlesex, NJ, this year. Dr. Smith, who taught school in the Philadelphia school system for more than 25 years before retiring, subsequently started a daycare center at the church in Williamstown, N.J., where she serves as pastor. She is also Consulting Head Teacher for two daycare centers in northern New Jersey. When the Bulletin caught up with Dr. Smith recently, she had just completed a training session with the teachers at her daycare center, The Motivating Youth Christian Learning Center.



"My training session turned out to be an eye-opening experience," recalls Dr. Smith. "I took for granted that my teachers would be familiar with basic fire-safety guidelines such as preparing exit plans. I discovered they were not. It reminded me of the importance of educating teachers and children alike."

The Learning Center offers daycare for infants through preschoolers and also has an after-school program for children up to 13 years. In addition to presenting *play safe! be safe!* to the teachers, Dr. Smith presented the program to the preschoolers and toddlers in a summer camp program.

She comments, "I decided to share portions of the program with the toddlers and was interested to observe how they grasped the larger concepts—hot, fire, touch. Of course, kit components were perfect for the preschoolers. Having the video helps to make the concepts so understandable. I was really gratified to have the kit."

"Shortly after the presentation," continues Dr. Smith, "we had a trip to our local fire station and I was delighted that the children remembered so much from the *play safe! be safe!* safety lessons. They could not wait to share their new knowledge with the firefighters." Dr. Smith is planning additional training sessions later this fall.

Ask Dr. Cole

Things We Take for Granted

In the "An Eye-Opening Experience" article, Dr. Connie Smith, who attended our Middlesex, N.J. workshop, talks about the first *play safe!*

be safe!® training session she presented to teachers at the daycare center she heads. She just assumed the teachers understood the importance of having a fire exit plan for their own families, but they didn't. Her comments resonated with me and it's the theme of this column. As fire safety educators, it is easy to take things for granted. We assume, for instance, that parents would understand the need to develop and practice an exit plan with their children or the need to have a working smoke alarm, but they don't.

We think children would understand a flame is hot because they can literally feel the heat. They do not have the experience or understanding of how a little flame can become a big flame and the damage it can cause. They also believe they can control the little match or candle flame.

We all have to be reminded of the risks, which brings me to another topic we take for granted. We assume that if we simply tell the children not to play with matches or lighters, tell them how to exit the house, show them how to crawl low under smoke, they will understand it and be able to do these things in an emergency. So it is not surprising that many people believe if we teach fire safety lessons to children once a year during Fire Prevention Week that it is sufficient.

Prevention is a never-ending quest. Adults forget or perhaps the importance of fire safety gets lost in the challenges of raising children. Children forget or come to believe they are old enough to do things once forbidden. To keep the fire safety message alive and fresh, we have to reintroduce it to children as often as possible. While you are thinking about fire safety this month, we urge you to use the *play safe! be safe!* video and lessons at every opportunity throughout the year.

Toy-like Lighter Ban in the National Spotlight

As reported in recent issues of the *play safe! be safe!*® Bulletin, Maine and Tennessee have passed legislation banning novelty lighters and similar bans are being introduced in other states, including Oregon. A ban is also in place in the European Union. Now the U.S. Congress is getting onboard.

Responding to calls from fire prevention and child safety groups across the country, U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) recently introduced the "Protect Children from Dangerous Lighters Act," legislation banning cigarette lighters constructed to look like toys or regular household items.

Toy-like Lighter Ban in the National Spotlight (continued)

"Because they are so well disguised as toys, novelty lighters have children literally playing with fire," said Wyden. "A nationwide ban, which is supported by firefighters and consumer groups alike, is the best way to keep these dangerous products out of the hands of youngsters."

Senator Collins said, "Novelty lighters can be deadly to young children and should be banned. While Maine is among states that have already approved such a ban, the ban should be nationwide. This is commonsense legislation that could help prevent additional injury and death of children resulting from lighters that look like toys or other items."



"While they may appear to be harmless toys, novelty lighters can be incredibly dangerous to young children," Dodd said. "I am proud to join Senators Wyden and Collins in introducing this legislation to ensure that no family is forced to face a tragedy because an innocent child confused a lighter for a toy."

The ban would require the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to treat novelty lighters as a banned hazardous substance, which would prohibit the manufacture, importation, or sale of the lighters anywhere in the country. Currently the lighters are easily purchased in convenience stores in many states.

Supporters of the federal ban include the National Association of State Fire Marshals, the Congressional Fire Institute, Safe Kids USA, the Consumer's Union, and the Consumer Federation of America. In addition, the ban is supported by the cigarette lighter industry, represented by the Lighter Association. Novelty lighters are largely imported from China. Judith Okulitch, State Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Coordinator with the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, has worked tirelessly to raise national awareness about this issue. She commented: "I am quite excited that we are this far on the federal level. If nothing moves this fall, we can look to the winter, 2009 session. In the meantime, Oregon is moving forward with a bill of its own. We expect to see a draft this fall. Our legislature meets in January, 2009 and we will be ready to roll."

The media continues to cover stories about toy-like lighters. The Daily Courier, Prescott, Ariz., had a story about the dangers of these lighters and noted that the Arizona legislature is considering a ban. The Mohave Daily News, Bullshead City, Ariz., reported the closing of the Laughlin/Bullshead International Airport because a novelty lighter in the shape of a grenade was discovered in carry-on luggage.

October 5-11: Fire Prevention Week

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The theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week, "Prevent Home Fires, focuses on making our homes "safe havens." Emphasis is being placed on avoiding fires from cooking, heating, electrical and smoking materials. The importance of maintaining working smoke alarms and preparing an escape route continues to be an important part of all Fire Prevention Week materials. At the National Fire Protection Association website (www.nfpa.org), teachers can download an inspection checklist, which children and parents can complete at home, safety tips and brochures.



Fire Prevention Puzzle

Deliver important messages to your class through a fire safety and prevention puzzle. [Click here](#) to download this fun activity and its instructions!