



YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION

VISION 20/20 PROJECT · INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS, USA BRANCH

SCHOOLS
&
TEACHERS

⚠ **CHILDREN AND YOUTH INVOLVED IN FIRESETTING REPRESENT A SERIOUS, PREVENTABLE PUBLIC SAFETY RISK IN EVERY COMMUNITY**

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Children, youth, and firesetting are a dangerous combination. Each year hundreds of deaths, injuries, and property losses are caused by youth setting fires. This behavior often indicates underlying problems — ranging from bullying and social media “challenges,” to problems at home and behavioral health needs. Regardless of motivation, the result can be devastating for the youth, their family, and the community.

97%+

Intervention effectiveness rate at stopping firesetting behavior when the unmet need behind it is identified

Gateway

Firesetting is considered a gateway crime — left unaddressed, it can lead to escalating criminal behavior

Any Age

Students who bring ignition devices to school — lighters, matches, or fuel — need immediate help

WHY SCHOOLS ARE ON THE FRONT LINE

Schools and teachers are uniquely positioned to identify at-risk youth before firesetting escalates. Appropriate intervention requires finding the root cause of firesetting behavior. For curious students, interventionists can provide fire science education. For more complex firesetting, social services or behavioral health professionals may be involved. **Directing students to helpful services can literally save their lives.**

WHAT SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS CAN DO

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

- If you suspect a student may be starting fires, inform caregivers of your concern **immediately**
- If a student starts even a small fire at school, notify caregivers and contact your local fire department
- Any student who brings ignition devices — lighters, matches, or fuel — to school needs professional help
- Visit yfires.com to locate a Youth Firesetting Intervention program in your area

ONGOING PREVENTION

- Help educate adults about keeping fire-starting tools safely stored and out of reach at home
- Ensure families have working smoke alarms on every level of the home and inside each sleeping area
- Work together with parents and caregivers to find appropriate responses and professional intervention
- Support school-fire department partnerships that bring YFPI awareness into prevention programming

IF NO PROGRAM EXISTS IN YOUR AREA

Contact your local fire department · Contact your local child welfare office or juvenile justice authority · Contact YFIRES directly at yfires.com for guidance and referral support. Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention teams maintain networks of community professionals to help address the youth and family's unmet needs.

NATIONAL RESOURCES & SUPPORT

The Vision 20/20 Project

National CRR leadership and tools supporting Youth Firesetting Prevention & Intervention programs across the country.

strategicfire.org

YFIRES Resource Center

Locate programs in your area, access screening tools, caregiver resources, and connect with subject matter experts.

yfires.com

National Fire Academy

Training for fire service personnel in youth firesetting assessment, intervention, and community coordination.

usfa.fema.gov/nfa

KEY TAKEAWAY

Schools and teachers are **critical partners** in identifying and interrupting youth firesetting behavior. You do not need to manage the problem alone — your role is to **recognize the warning signs and connect the student to the right resources**. Intervention works, and acting early can change the trajectory of a young person's life.