Start Safe: A Fire and Burn Safety Program for Preschoolers and their Families

hosted by the **Children's Safety Network**

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm EDT

On your telephone please dial 1-800-361-5659, then type in pass code and 220737#

Please be sure to mute the volume on your computer.
Children's Safety Network
Introduction
About the Start Safe Program

- Our new **Start Safe** program is designed to give *preschool teachers and fire and life safety educators* the tools they need to reach *preschool children and their families*.

  - **Early childhood educators** can use the **Start Safe** program to present classroom lessons that **help young children recognize and stay away from fire and burn hazards**.

  - **Fire and life safety educators** can also use the **Start Safe** program materials to **help parents and caregivers make their homes safer**.
About the Start Safe Program

- Delivering lessons to *both preschool teachers and fire and life safety educators* makes **Start Safe** an effective way to reduce fire injuries and deaths to this high risk population.
Thanks to our Sponsors

- Major funding for the Start Safe program is provided by an AFG Fire Prevention and Safety Grant through the FEMA/Grants Program Directorate and support from Tyco International and First Alert.
Thanks to our Partners

- Special thanks to *Weekly Reader Custom Publishing*, *National Head Start Association*, *Fire Protection Publications at Oklahoma State University* and *ProLiteracy* for their support of the Start Safe program.
Why is Start Safe Important?

- **Start Safe Fills a National Safety Education Gap:**
  - Preschool-aged children have a higher risk of being seriously injured by home fires and burns, especially in low-income families.
  - Home Safety Council research shows that the age groups at most risk of dying in a fire are adults age 70 and older, followed by children younger than 5 years old.
Why is Start Safe Important?

- **Start Safe Fills a National Safety Education Gap:**
  - The Home Safety Council’s 2007 survey of U.S. fire departments found that **80 percent of fire safety education is done exclusively through elementary schools.**
  - **Very few programs are designed specifically to reach preschoolers** with age-appropriate lessons.
  - **Start Safe** will help fire departments **bridge that gap and reach more preschoolers** and their families with life-saving fire and burn prevention messages.
Start Safe Program Lessons

- **Start Safe** teaches fire and burn safety basics:
  - Classroom materials for children focus on one simple concept … “I Spot Something Hot.”

- **Start Safe** also includes teaching tools to educate parents and caregivers on the simple steps they can take to make their homes safer.
Start Safe Philosophy: Reaching Preschoolers

- Preschoolers require a different approach and Start Safe takes this to heart:
  - 4-, 5- and 6-year-olds are too young to understand what’s needed to get out of a burning home and safely to their meeting place.
  - The Start Safe program focuses on one simple concept – “I Spot Something Hot.”
  - Repeating “I Spot Something Hot” teaches them to identify and stay away from things in the home that are hot.
Start Safe Philosophy: Reaching Preschoolers

- Children are taught to identify hot things and get a grown up to help them fix dangerous things by saying: “Code Red Rover, Grownup Come Over!”

- The Start Safe program lets preschoolers listen to the sound of a smoke alarm.

- Preschoolers are encouraged to participate in fire drills at home and school to practice their fire escape plan with the grownups in their lives.
Start Safe Philosophy: Educating Caregivers

- Caregiver education is a very important component of the Start Safe program:
  - *Parents and caregivers* are the only ones who can really **take action** to make the home a safer place.

- The *Start Safe* program includes teaching tools you can use **specifically to reach parents and caregivers** with the important information they need to make changes at home.
Start Safe Philosophy: Educating Caregivers

- We include a **DVD that shows you how to work with adults** to help them keep the children they love safe from fires and burns at home.

- All **Start Safe** program materials are available in **English and Spanish** and the adult portions **are written in plain language** making them **easy to read** for all.
Partnering for Success

- You’re not alone – we’ve designed **Start Safe** to make it easy for you to succeed.
  - Preschool teachers and administrators are willing and able local partners – reach out to them for support!

- Head Start is our national partner, but your partners are not limited to Head Start schools.

- Reach out to any of the regulated family daycares in your community.
Start Safe Components
Start Safe Program Contents

- Program materials are:
  - Written in English and Spanish
  - Highly visual
  - Created to meet the learning needs of children ages 4-6
Start Safe Program Contents

- Classroom tools include:
  - “I Spot Something Hot” Big Book
  - Animated DVD featuring HSC mascots Rover, the Home Safety Hound, and Freddie Flashlight, plus two new puppy mascots – Wiggle and Giggle
Start Safe Program Components

- Parent Brochure
  - Brochure you can use to reach parents and caregivers with the important information they need to make changes at home.
Start Safe Program Contents

- Two Separate Expert Guides
  - One specifically for fire and life safety educators
  - One for preschool teachers and administrators
Includes five separate segments, including four you can use to increase your Start Safe proficiency:

- **Segment One: Getting Started in Your Community**
  - Introduces the program
  - Explains the importance of local partnerships
  - Demonstrates the Start Safe pilot program in Champaign, Illinois
Fire & Life Safety Educator DVD

- Segment Two: What’s in the Start Safe Program
  - Walks you through the print materials
Segment Three: Age-Appropriate Learning

- Explains the need for developmentally appropriate materials and specific tips for effective teaching
Segment Four: Evaluating the Start Safe Program

- Stresses the importance of evaluation for fire and life safety educators
- Takes the mystery out of the evaluation practice
Fire & Life Safety Educator DVD

- Includes one segment you can use in your community presentations:

  - “Start Safe for Parents and Caregivers”
    - A new video you can use in your presentations to parents and caregivers of preschoolers.
    - It’s the perfect tool to help you bring the Start Safe program to life at your Start Safe Parents’ Meeting.
Start Safe Presentation

- The PowerPoint presentation is a turn-key teaching tool you can use in your community presentations.

- The notes section includes a script you can follow with built-in research-based educational messaging.

- The presentation is customizable
  - It’s easy to add your own local statistics, department agency logos and information.
All of the Start Safe program materials are available for download from the Home Safety Council Web site.

Visit [www.homesafetycouncil.org/startsafeprogram](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/startsafeprogram) to download program components.
Best Practices in Start Safe Delivery
Developmentally Appropriate Fire and Burn Safety Education

- Uses the science of developmentally appropriate early childhood education practice to increase our educational effectiveness.
Maximize Children’s Learning

- We have a small window of opportunity with very short attention spans!

- The “teachable moment” is very brief....

- Make the most of it!
Start with the Basics of Child Development

- How children grow
- How children develop
- How children learn
Measure Growth and Development

- A child’s growth and development can be measured by:
  - Social development milestones
    - Sharing
    - Taking turns
    - Waiting in line
Measure Growth and Development

- Physical development milestones
  - Large motor skills
    - Walking and running
  - Small motor skills
    - Using a spoon
    - Coloring with a marker
Measure Growth and Development

- Cognitive developmental milestones
  - Building vocabulary
  - Problem solving
Recent Studies

- Recent studies at Oklahoma State University compared:
  - Knowledge and abilities needed to accomplish fire safety skills with child development milestones
  - Looking at the two together, we were able to:
    - Assess age appropriateness
    - Match key fire safety messages to teaching methods
Recent Studies

- Oklahoma State University Study Outcomes:
  - Update common fire safety messages
  - Using vocabulary that is more understandable for young children
What we learned about…

- Fire safety messages for children
  - Some need to be modified to make **BETTER** messages
  - More **understandable** for children
A Better Message

“Practice a home escape plan”

Children do not understand the word PLAN, but they do.....
A Better Message

......know the word MAP

“Use a home escape MAP”
A Better Message

“Practice a home escape plan”

Children do not know the word **HOME ESCAPE**, but they do.....
A Better Message

….understand **FIRE DRILL**

“Practice a family **FIRE DRILL**”
“Practice a FAMILY FIRE DRILL using your escape MAP”
Modify Messages

“Tell a grown up if you find matches or a lighter…”

And add:

..NEVER TOUCH
Better Messages for Children

- Have a home escape MAP
- Practice your FAMILY FIRE DRILL
Better Messages for Children

- Tell a grown-up if you find matches or a lighter & **NEVER TOUCH**
Better Messages for Children

- **Start Safe** program focuses on one simple concept

- “*I Spot Something Hot*” – teaches children to identify and stay away from things in the home that are hot

- More age-appropriate than **Stop, Drop & Roll** and **Crawl Low Under Smoke**
Better Messages for Children

- Example: Stop, Drop and Roll
- Good for elementary age students
- But, beyond the mastery of most preschool students
Better Messages for Children

- While children at AGE 5 can follow directions with three parts and in the proper sequence, younger children cannot

- That’s why “Stop, Drop and Roll” is not a priority in the Start Safe program
  - It is well beyond the capabilities of most 4-year-olds
Better Messages for Children

- Yes, children can repeat the slogan, “Stop, Drop and Roll”
  - But they do not understand how and when to Stop, Drop and Roll
  - Frequently demonstrate their lack of understanding by mixing up “Get Low and Go” under smoke with “Stop, Drop and Roll”
Better Messages

- If you and the teacher decide to teach Stop, Drop and Roll for the 5-and 6-year olds:
  1. Repeat the lesson a number of times – once is never enough for this message
  2. Ensure there is enough space for all the children to practice at one time…no making them wait their turn!
  3. YOU must demonstrate it for the children – just talking about it is not educational – you must show how
Examples in Start Safe

- Reflects the latest early childhood education practices:
  - Vocabulary within understanding of young children
  - NOT teaching fire and burn safety messages that are beyond their capabilities

- Start Safe customizes home fire and burn safety to the level of the preschooler!
  - Replaces traditional complex messages with simple messages that are more comprehensible for young children
Examples in Start Safe

- Family escape planning is complicated and we simplified it!
  - Go Outside and Stay Outside!
    - Simple and better because a young child can understand and remember it.
    - Go outside. Stay outside.
    - Now they know what to do!
Messages for Parents

- What about home fire and burn safety for caregivers?
  - Make sure your home is protected with plenty of working smoke alarms
  - And parents, plan how you will help your children escape safely in a fire:
    - Plan for this
    - Practice family fire drills
The Start Safe program:
- Prioritizes key messages with the GREATEST potential to save lives
- Includes simple developmentally appropriate messaging for children
- Includes messages specific to the role of parents and caregivers in keeping children safe at home from fires and burns
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Stick to the script

- Keep it short – watch for fidgeting – it is a sure sign you’ve lost their attention

- Use simple words – say “firefighter” instead of “Captain” and fire truck or fire engine instead of “apparatus”
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Use positive words

- Use positive messages and only model the RIGHT actions – children are copy cats
  
  - Children do NOT know the difference between real and pretend
  
  - By showing what *not* to do, we risk that children will remember the dangerous behavior
Repeat, repeat, repeat and repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat!

- Young children love repetition
- *Start Safe* includes many ways to teach “I Spot Something Hot”

Repetition helps children gain confidence as well as learn new information

- Visit the classroom more than once and repeat the same lesson
- Children will have more fun the second time
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Work with small groups
- Don’t frighten children
  - A scared child can’t listen
  - Fear shuts down the brain’s response ability
  - Fire is a serious topic, but remember:
    - Young children are easily overwhelmed by the blunt facts about the effects of fire
    - Don’t bring images of burned toys or clothing or discuss frightening things such as a lost pet
    - It won’t help the children to tell them that fires are scary, or that they hurt people and homes
    - It can be harmful to ask frightening questions, like “Do you know what would happen if a fire broke out at night?”
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Prevent anxiety

- Young children are taught to be careful of strangers
  - When you enter the classroom, remember that you are a stranger and one who is much bigger than the children
  - Go into the classroom dressed in a casual station uniform
  - Wait for the teacher to introduce you and move slowly into your presentation

- Never enter the classroom in your gear

- Follow the Rules: Wash your hands
Start Safe Keys to Success

- **Why am I showing the children my gear?**
  - You want children to be familiar with a firefighter’s protective equipment so they won’t be scared of you in an emergency
  - Explain each piece of clothing and equipment

- **Key Concept:** You want the children to know you are the same friendly firefighter when you’re wearing your special firefighting clothes as you are when you’re wearing your regular clothes

- You look and sound different, but you are the same friendly firefighter
Start Safe Keys to Success

- A classroom poster showing a firefighter in station gear and in full protective equipment including self-contained breathing apparatus is included in the Start Safe materials.
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Use [clean gear](#)
  - A set that is reserved for [demonstrations only](#) is best
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Your SCBA is the item that makes you look the most different
  - Put it on
  - Connect the regulator
  - Breathe with the mask
  - Talk with the mask
  - Stay still on your hands and knees when you are fully dressed and wearing the breathing apparatus
  - Let the children approach you
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Let the children touch the gloves, helmets and turnout fabrics
  - Do NOT approach or crawl toward the children
  - Some children may just want to wave to you and not get too close
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Now, just a few more tips:
  - Be positive and sincere
  - Smile and relax and be yourself

- Be a good role model
  - Children watch and learn through what adults do
  - They are mimics and they will mimic what you do – not just what they see you do in the classroom, but what they see you do in your community
    - Wear your helmet when riding a bike
    - Use your seat belt
    - Use the crosswalk at school
Start Safe Keys to Success

- The teacher is an important partner and can:
  - Introduce you to the students
  - Remain in the classroom with you and the children
  - Help direct the children’s questions
  - Help decide about demonstrating protective equipment
  - Inform you about children who might have had a fire or burn experience
Start Safe Keys to Success

Now you are ready to begin:

- Start with basic lessons:
  - Recognize things that are hot
  - Stay away from things that are hot
  - Call a grown up over
- Visit the classroom several times
- Repeat the lessons often
- Use the Big Book
- Use the DVD with Rover, Freddie and the puppies – Giggle and Wiggle
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Parents and caregivers are **KEY**:  

- Have a special meeting just for adults
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Parents and caregivers are **KEY**:

  - Use the PowerPoint or DVD to teach adults
Parents and caregivers are **KEY**:  

- Ensure all adults receive the tools distributed for them  
- Try to involve firefighters from the community you’re working with
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Share the Start Safe program with your department educators:
  - Consistent messages
  - Repeated over and over is the best policy
  - Use the Start Safe messages
    - Classrooms
    - Station tours
    - In media opportunities
    - All other types of outreach
Start Safe Keys to Success

- All firefighters can use Start Safe
  - Simplified messages
    - Better for young children
    - Might be better for older children and adults to understand as well!
Start Safe Keys to Success

- Finally, please **BE ALERT** for any sign of children playing with or using fire tools
  - Fire setting behavior is very dangerous
  - Requires professional intervention
Start Safe Summary

- Following these tips and using the **Start Safe** materials, **teachers and firefighters make a great team** to keep children and their families safe from home fires and burns!

- **Thank you for doing your part** to make the homes of preschool children safe!
Highlights from the Field
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

- Designed to Measure:
  - Adequacy and appropriateness of team training
  - Adequacy and appropriateness of implementation methods
  - Satisfaction with the program materials
  - Changes in knowledge and the home safety environment
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

- **Methods:**
  - Surveys – teachers, parent advocates, fire service educators
  - Interviews – follow up questions with each team
  - Parent knowledge test
  - Home behavior change survey
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

- Pilot Test Procedures:
  - **Team** =
    - Head Start teacher,
    - Fire service educator, and
    - Head Start parent advocate
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

Pilot Test Procedures:

- **Plan Together:**
  - Four classroom presentations
  - One by the fire service educator
  - One parent presentation
  - One additional event for families
  - Teach key messages using *Start Safe* materials
  - Complete surveys and interviews
Pilot Site Communities

- Implementation: April – July 2009
  - Sacramento, CA
  - Washington, DC
  - Tampa, FL
  - Atlanta, GA
  - Hagerstown, MD
  - St. Paul, MN
  - North Las Vegas, NV
  - Thomasville, NC
  - Cincinnati, OH
  - Philadelphia, PA
  - Vancouver, WA
Pilot Site Communities

- Implementation September – November 2009
  - Champaign, Illinois
  - Nowata, Oklahoma – Cherokee Nation
  - Trenton, New Jersey
Start Safe Lessons Learned

- The partnership between Head Start teachers, parent advocates and fire service educators worked well.
- Most partnerships will continue to deliver the program.
- Start Safe materials were well received by children, teachers, parents and the fire service.
- Children were engaged by the activities.
- Ready resources for presentation made it easy to deliver the project.
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

- Teams found their own ways to make Start Safe special in their communities:
  - “Fire and Ice (cream)” culminating activity – St. Paul, Minnesota
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

- Special handmade invitation to parents – Vancouver, Washington
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

- Reinforcement of previous lessons learned – Thomasville, North Carolina
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

- Fire safety classroom center – Philadelphia, PA
Start Safe Formative Evaluation

- Challenge: Involving parents and caregivers throughout the project.

- Promising Practices:
  - Teamwork
  - Advance notice
  - Consideration of schedules
  - Options for face-to-face time
  - Incentives
Start Safe Stories

- Start Safe stories will soon be posted online and available for review from:
  
  www.homesafetycouncil.org/startsafeprogram
Evaluation
Start Safe Evaluation Results

- We installed 31 smoke alarms in homes that had none.
- We installed additional smoke alarms in homes that needed them and replaced 66 old batteries with new ones.
- Prior to Start Safe, only 21 families had mapped out their escape plan, but after the program, 85 families had!
- 90 families practiced their family fire drill.
Start Safe Distribution

- **Start Safe** was distributed to 6,750 Head Start centers nationwide

- Estimated Reach:
  - 31,467 teachers
  - 432,149 students
  - 432,149 parents

- Nearly 900,000 total reach
All of the educators rated the overall educational value of Start Safe as “Excellent” (73.85%) or “Above Average” (26.15%)

None of the educators rated the program “Average,” “Below Average” or “Poor”

On average, the program received 4.74 points on the 5-point rating scale (5 = Excellent, 1 = Poor)
Start Safe Evaluation Results

- Program Component Utilization:
  - 72.8% of the teachers reported that they watched the *I Spot Something Hot* DVD with their students
  - 88.52% of the educators read the *Big Book* with their students
  - 86.99% of the survey respondents said they photocopied and distributed the activity sheets to their students
  - 99.21% of the teachers reported that they distributed the booklets to parents and caregivers
Start Safe Evaluation Results

- Program Effectiveness:
  - The Start Safe program had a significant impact on students’ knowledge of things in the home that might be hot. *All of the survey respondents observed an increase in their students’ awareness of what might be hot:*
    - 91.47% of the teachers said their students were definitely more aware of things in the home that are or can be hot
    - 8.53% of the teachers said their students were somewhat more aware of things in the home that are or can be hot
Educator Comments on Start Safe

- “This is a very well designed teaching tool that benefits our children and families. Our parents’ comments were so positive and each commented they had learned from it as well. Anytime we can use a program like this, we all win.” – Preschool teacher, Rienzi, MS

- “The children were engaged and repeating the phrases. They especially enjoyed the end when items popped out and they got to shout out whether or not items were hot. I would definitely use this program again.” – Preschool teacher, Waterville, ME

- “I had a lot of children who went home and found out where they had smoke detectors and if they worked!” – Preschool teacher, Sheboygan, WI
Conclusion
Start Safe Program Highlights

- Underscores the need for early childhood fire and burn safety education

- Reinforces the importance of involving parents and caregivers to help keep children safe from fire and burn injuries

- Just in time for Fire Safety Month in October, all Webinar participants and Expert Network members will receive a FREE copy of the Start Safe program!
Thank You!

Questions?

www.homesafetycouncil.org/startsaferprogram