

SOME ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PROTECTING YOUR CHILDREN FROM FIRE

- Plan a primary escape route and an alternate route from every room. Mount the plan in a conspicuous spot in each room. Call it to the attention of volunteers and other adults.
- If your center is not required to have an electrical fire alarm system, use a signaling device which can be reached in seconds and can be heard throughout the center. It must be out of the children's reach and used for nothing else.
- Teach the children that they are to stop anything they are doing when they hear the signal and meet the adult immediately at a particular place. Inside this would probably be at one designated door or window in each room and would never be changed. Outdoors it would be a place in the yard away from the building. Tying a red cloth on the back fence is one method of identifying the safe place in the yard.
- Children will react as you do – calmly or frantically – so remind them where they are to go in a distinct, forceful but calm voice and accompany them to the predetermined safe spot in the yard.
- If there are two adults, one leads and one follows. Do not expect small children to take responsibility for other children or for such things as closing doors or turning on lights.
- Experienced teachers count noses all day long—not audibly except occasionally for fun. This means teachers always know the number of children in their group. They can accurately and quickly count when the children assemble in the room and again when they assemble in the yard.
- Sleeping children present a problem. This is one reason why at least one adult must be with every group during nap time and enough adults on the premises to evacuate all children.
- If you care for infants and/or toddlers, special consideration must be given to their evacuation. Infants should regularly be in a room next to an exit. Every adult on the premises except those assigned to other children should go immediately to assist the teachers of infants and toddlers.
- Exits, hallways and other evacuation routes must be clear at all times. Do not plan an exit through a kitchen or furnace room if you can avoid it.
- Every person in the building should practice fire drills. The drills should be practiced regularly at least once a month at different times of the day when the children are in different rooms and activities. Some drills should be a surprise to the adults. Time the drills so you know you are evacuating in three minutes.

- All staff should understand the operation of fire extinguishers so well they can use them automatically. But the staff responsible for the children cannot be expected to be responsible for fire extinguishers, too. The building is important, but is secondary to the safety of the children.
- Designate someone other than a teacher to call the fire department and to close doors and windows.
- No adult should take possessions out or return to get them. This is a poor example for the children.
- Discuss school safety plans with parents and encourage them to develop a home evacuation plan.