

Home Fire Drills Could Save Your Child's Life

It's a frightening statistic - Each year, fires and burns kill more than 1,100 children ages 14 and under. Over 11,000 children are injured by fires in their homes.

One reason children die in home fires can be explained by their reactions to fire. Young children often hide under beds or in closets thinking they are safe from the fire. Older children mistakenly think they can control the fire. Some fear blame, so they fail to alert an adult.

The national SAFE KIDS Campaign (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) recommends that parents and caregivers prepare children in case of a residential fire. Take time to have a home fire drill by doing the following activities:

- Teach your children what the smoke detector alarm sounds like.
- Plan two escape routes from your house and practice them with your children.
- Designate an outside meeting place - a tree, street light or a neighbor's house - where family members should go immediately after leaving the house.
- Teach your children to touch doors before opening them. Tell them to use another exit if the door is hot.
- Teach your children to crawl under the smoke. Practice crawling with your child around his or her room.
- Teach children never to re-enter a burning building.

Remember, children need to know exactly what to do when they hear the smoke alarm or see thick, black smoke. It could save their lives.

Did you know that fires started by children playing with matches or lighters represent three out of 10 preschool child fire deaths? Keep matches and lighters away from children.