



Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **The Safety of Young Children – fire and burns
(PROTECTION)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

The Safety of Young Children – fire and burns

Objectives:

- To alert parents/caregivers to fire hazards in the home.
- To inform parents/caregivers some of the basic rules around fire prevention and safety from the different causes of fires.
- To give them ideas on how they can teach their young children to be fire safe.
- To inform parents/caregivers what to do in the event of a young child being burned.
- To inform them of national emergency numbers and encourage them to have these displayed or saved on mobile phones.

Introduction

We know in winter time fires become a major problem in South Africa, particularly in many of the informal settlements around big cities, where they quickly get out of control and spread fast to other structures. The most common causes of these fires are open flames (40%), followed by electrical faults, cooking and smoking. Fire and burns account for 41% of accidental deaths in South Africa and are the leading external cause of death in infants under age 1 and the second leading cause of death in young children between 1 and 4 years old. The highest incidence of burn deaths take place between August and October, and most occur during sleeping hours.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>In winter South Africa faces the greatest risk of fire. What are some of the major causes of fire?</i></p>	<p>Yes – fire poses great danger to our precious young children, as they do not understand the danger of fire, electricity, hot liquids or chemicals and it is adults’ responsibility to protect them and consistently teach them how to protect themselves as their understanding grows.</p> <p>Of course, the best way to practice fire safety is to make sure a fire doesn't break out in the first place. That means you should always be aware of potential hazards in your home. Some of the common causes of fires in the home are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open flames from a fire, a candle, a gas flame, a paraffin lamp, a lit match or a cigarette, setting alight curtains, carpets, paper, clothes or other items that will burn. These flames can spread quickly.• Faulty electrical connections and appliances, or electrical connections and appliances that have not been

2. *What should parents and caregivers do to prevent these fires?*

properly installed or fitted by qualified electricians are often causes of fires. Frayed electric cords, extension cords that are too long or overloaded plugs or adaptors can start fires. Bar heaters can get knocked over and cause a fire.

- **The kitchen** is full of ways for a fire to start: food left unsupervised on a stove or oven or microwave; grease or oil spills; a dish towel too close to the hot plate or toaster are common fire starters.
- **Cigarette smoking** is a major cause of fires. Smokers sometimes fall asleep while smoking & let a cigarette fall onto something that will burn. Smoking and drinking are a particularly dangerous combination.

PREVENTION is the key and there is a lot that parents or caregivers can do to prevent fires in the home:

- **Open flames** – only use wood in a fireplace as paper and other materials can spark and set alight nearby items; NEVER leave a fire unattended and NEVER leave a young child unattended near a fire. Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed.
- Put candles in proper holders so that they can't tip over and make sure they are not close to curtains or other items that could catch fire. NEVER leave a candle unattended or within reach of a young child. Always make sure you put the candle out before leaving the house

<p>3. <i>What can parents do to prevent electrical fires?</i></p>	<p>or going to bed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The same applies to any naked flame – put the appliance somewhere safe where it can't tip over or set something else alight and put it out if you go out of the room or go to sleep.• Playing with matches is a leading cause of burns and injury in young children. Keep matches and lighters out of young children's reach and teach them the danger of lighting a match. <p>Parents have a responsibility to ensure electrical connections, appliances, cords, adaptors and plugs in the home are in good repair and safe. DO NOT get an illegal electricity connection into your home, or allow someone who is not a qualified electrician to wire your house or install appliances. You may think you are saving money, BUT no money will bring your child or another loved one back from injury or death.</p> <p>Other ways to prevent electrical fires are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't overload plugs, adaptors or extension cords with appliances.• Make sure cords are in good condition and not frayed or there are loose wires in plugs.• Don't run electrical cords under carpets.• Make sure heaters or lamps are not touching curtains, beds or any other fabrics.• Bar heaters are dangerous, especially for babies, toddlers and young children.
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<p>4. <i>What about when Mum is cooking in the kitchen?</i></p> <p>5. <i>But fires are not always the only cause of burns are they? So what else should parents and caregivers be aware of to prevent young children being burned.</i></p>	<p>Rather buy a fan heater and put it where it cannot be knocked over or trip someone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have plug outlets in your house, cover them to prevent babies, toddlers or young children sticking things into the holes. Plug covers are very cheap. <p>Cooking can be a leading cause of fire in the home. Never leave the kitchen unattended when cooking is taking place and NEVER leave a young child unattended in the kitchen. Mums with babies should not cook while they are holding the baby or toddler. It's easy for their clothing to catch fire or for them to reach out and touch something hot. Young children do not understand the danger of fire or hot things.</p> <p>You are so right and that's what makes the kitchen a particularly dangerous room for babies and toddlers. Hot liquid is a major cause of burns in young children. Without thinking they grab a pot handle or a cup of coffee and the hot liquid scalds or burns them. Many horrific injuries are caused in this way and can leave a child disfigured for life. Parents can prevent these injuries by being especially careful not to let young children near pots and pans on the stove; to turn pot handles away; watch out for steam from boiling liquids, kettles or food; to put cups of hot coffee or tea well out of reach & not drink these while their young</p>
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<p>6. <i>Is there such a thing as a chemical burn?</i></p> <p>7. <i>If a child does get burned, what should a parent do?</i></p>	<p>child is sitting on their laps. Be careful if you are carrying around hot pots, kettles or liquid, that you are not going to trip over something or even the children. Always check the temperature of the bath water with your elbow before putting your baby or toddler in the bath.</p> <p>There certainly is. Once again, young children are exceptionally curious and do not understand danger, so it's up to us adults to protect them. Not only can children be burned by chemicals, they can also die from drinking poisonous chemicals. All dangerous chemicals like gas, paraffin, cleaning fluids and other poisonous liquids must be put well out of reach and out of sight.</p> <p>The most important thing to do is not to panic, but to assess how serious the burn is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek immediate emergency medical help for any serious burn when the burn area is bigger than the palm of your hand or for any burn that covers more than 10% of the child's body; is on the head, hands, any joint or private parts. While you wait, keep your child lying down and remove all clothing from around the burn area, except for any clothing stuck to the skin. Cover the burn area with a clean soft cloth or towel. Do not use wet cloths or ice as it can cause the child's body temperature
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to drop.

- If your child's clothing catches fire, get them to drop to the ground and roll to put out the flames, or do the same by quickly rolling them on the ground in a blanket. Do not let them run, as that will make the flames get bigger. As soon as you have put the flames out, keep them lying down and cover them with a clean soft sheet until medical attention arrives.
- If your child is experiencing an electric shock, throw a towel or blanket over him and pull him away. Do not touch him directly or you too will be shocked.
- For chemical burns, flood the area with clean running water for 5 minutes or more.
- Both electrical and chemical burns may not be visible, but can be serious because of potential damage to internal organs of the body. Seek emergency medical help.
- If the burn is small, remove clothing from the burn area and run cool (**NOT COLD**) water over the burn area (if water isn't available, any cool drinkable fluid can be used). **Do not use ice as it may cause more skin damage. Do not put on butter, powder or any other burn remedies – they can make the**

<p>8. <i>So how can parents or caregivers help young children understand the dangers of fires and learn how to protect themselves?</i></p>	<p>burn injury worse and risk infection.</p> <p>Watch your child carefully and if you are at all concerned, take her to the clinic or doctor.</p> <p>Parents can start teaching their children fire safety from an early age. As soon as baby has some understanding they can learn about ‘hot. Don’t touch because it’s sore.’ Gently put her fingers to a hot cup of tea or coffee and dramatically snatch the hand away and say ‘Hot! Hot!’ As their understanding grows, you can introduce more lessons about fire safety and what to do, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never play with matches, candles or fires.• If clothing catches fire – stop, drop and roll until the flames are out. Don’t run – it makes flames bigger.• In a fire, cover your mouth and nose with a damp cloth and crawl along the floor under the smoke & get out of the house as quickly as possible. Smoke kills.• If there’s a fire in the building, don’t go and hide – get out quickly and stay out. Do not go in again for ANY reason, not even to save your pet dog or cat or precious toy.• Immediately tell an adult. <p>Young children forget quickly, so it’s important for adults to repeat the safety messages and to</p>
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9. *Are there emergency numbers that should be clearly displayed in every home, saved on everyone's cell phone and taught to children as soon as they are old enough to remember?*

practice what to do often. Role play is also a good way of teaching.

Plan escape routes from your house, that each member of the family knows and have a set meeting place.

Yes there are and your suggestions are very important. Emergency telephone numbers for the closest hospital, clinic, ambulance service and police station, should be **clearly displayed in every home**. You never know when you will need them and in a crisis, people panic and often can't remember what to do or where things are. Nearly everyone has a cell phone now and these emergency numbers can be saved on your cell phone on speed dial.

The national emergency numbers are:

- **Emergency response – 10111**
- **Cell phone emergency number – 112**
- **Ambulance - 10177**
- **Your closest police station**

Keep calm and make sure you have the following details ready:

1. **The nature of the emergency**
2. **Exactly where you are (including landmarks, so emergency services can easily find you)**
3. **The details about any injuries.**
4. **And DON'T put the phone down until emergency services know exactly where to find you and you are told to end the call.**

Conclusion

We often think these things can't happen to us, or that we'll do all these things some time, but not right now - I'm too busy. DO IT NOW. As the parent, you have an enormous responsibility to keep your young children safe. The things we have discussed above will not take long and could save your child from injury or death. Fires and burns can happen so quickly and easily and if you put in place these messages to prevent fires; practice safety and teach your children to protect themselves, as well as knowing what to do in the event of a burn, you may save their lives or prevent injury. What can be more important than that?

Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Understand causes of fires and potential fire hazards in the home.
- Understand the safety precautions to take to prevent fires.
- Gain some ideas on how to teach their young children to be fire safe.
- Know what to do in the event of a young child being burned.
- Know the national emergency numbers and understand why it is so important to have these displayed or saved on mobile phones.