



Youth Firesetter Intervention Program

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Youth Firesetter Intervention Program Information

The Burn Institute's Youth Firesetter Intervention Program (YFS) began as a diversion program in 1989, using education to prevent youth from continued fire setting. Today the YFS program has significantly expanded and advanced. The program incorporates evidence-based risk assessment tools and education to intervene in dangerous fire setting behavior and stop it at the source.

What do we do?

- Respond to referrals from county fire departments, law enforcement, school officials, probation, juvenile justice systems, Metro Arson Strike Team, and others in San Diego and Imperial Counties (including self-referral)
- Provide **risk assessments** for future fire setting behaviors
- Provide **(two) education courses**, which are cognitively and age appropriate with the youth and family about legal ramifications, fiscal ramifications, and the dangers to self and others
- Make referrals to community agencies to address compounding clinical issues
- Maintain confidential database of youth referrals and assessment results

Who do we serve? What is the cost?

- Males and females under age 18 who are referred for fire setting behaviors are eligible for services
- Available in English and Spanish; other languages may require additional time to obtain an interpreter
- Services are provided **free of charge** to residents from San Diego and Imperial Counties

Why refer to us?

- Each year, Burn Institute serves over 200 youth and their families with this program
- 55% of U.S. arson arrests are under the age of 18, and almost half of these arrests are age 15 and under
- Arson is the 2nd leading cause of all fatal home accidents, and fire setting is the largest cause of home deaths among children *
- Almost 34% of the victims of child-set fires are **the children themselves** *
- Fire setting behavior can be costly, dangerous, and place children, families and the community at risk
- Our intervention program gives youth firesetters a second chance, and an opportunity to reach their maximum potential

* Per Federal Emergency Management Administration

The program consists of an initial assessment in a casual setting in which confidential interviews are conducted with the child and parent/guardian to determine the reason behind the behavior. In addition to reviewing consequences of fire play, the family is responsible for fire safety activities including planning and practicing a home fire escape plan, testing smoke alarms in the home, and securing all matches and lighters.

If you have received a referral to the YFS Program, the Burn Institute will contact you within 48 working hours to schedule an appointment. The services are confidential and free of charge.

**Please contact the Youth Firesetter Program Coordinator at
858-541-2277 x 111 or YFS@burninstitute.org.**