

# YOUTH FIRESETTING MYTHS AND FACTS

## Myths and Facts – Firesetting

### Myth

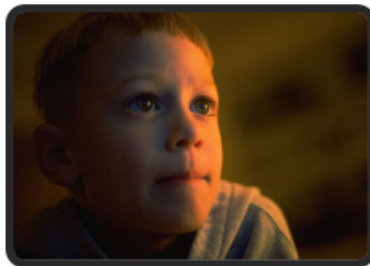
A child can control a small fire.

### Fact

**Most fires start small but can become uncontrollable quickly.**



## Myths and Facts – Firesetting (cont'd)



### Myth

It is normal for children to play with fire.

### Fact

**For children, interest in fire is natural; setting fires is not!**

## Myths and Facts – Firesetting (cont'd)

### Myth

Firesetting is a phase that children will outgrow.

### Fact

**Firesetting is not a phase. If a child is not taught fire safety, the firesetting can get out of control easily. It is a dangerous behavior; you can't afford to wait to change it.**

## Myths and Facts – Firesetting (cont'd)

### Myth

Many children are obsessed with fire.

### Fact

**Very few children are obsessed with fire. There is always a reason for firesetting. That reason needs to be discovered and dealt with.**



## Myths and Facts – Firesetting (cont'd)

### Myth

If you take a child to the burn unit to see burn victims, he/she will stop playing with fire.

### Fact

**Going to the burn unit instills fear and does not teach the child anything about fire and safety. More importantly, we need to be sensitive to burn survivors who are trying to recover (emotionally and physically) from their burns and we should not put them on display.**

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## Myths and Facts – Firesetting (cont'd)

### Myth

Put a child in the back of a police car or have a firefighter talk sternly to them and it will stop firesetting behaviors.

### Fact

**A police officer will put a child in the back of their patrol car only if they have legal authority and it is appropriate to do so. Scare tactics don't get to the root of the problem and these kids typically continue to set fires**

## Myths and Facts – Firesetting (cont'd)

### Myth

Over 50 percent of youth firesetters have mental health disorders and/or learning disabilities.

### Fact

**Current research reveals that under 25 percent of juveniles involved in firesetting have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder and/or learning disability. However, this is not to say that youth firesetters (and perhaps family members) are not challenged by some type of undiagnosed disorder.**