

Practice Note

Fire Safety

This practice note is to assist practitioners in providing information to the families they work with, to share with colleagues and other community professionals and to support the work they do to keep children and families safe. Residential fire is the leading cause of unintentional death for young children at home and the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury-related death overall. Below are the recommendations from the research study on Paediatric Accidental Residential Fire Deaths in Ontario, included in the Report of the Paediatric Death Review Committee and Deaths Under Five Committee, June 2009, written by the Office of the Chief Coroner, Province of Ontario. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Working smoke alarms should be installed on every floor of the house and in every room used for sleeping.
2. Smoke alarms should be tested every month and cleaned every 3 months, with batteries changed once per year.
3. CAS and other agency staff who make home visits to check up on vulnerable children should pay attention to the presence, location, and functionality of smoke detectors. Any non-compliance should be reported to the Fire Marshall's Office for further investigation and subsequent resolution.
4. School programs should continue to emphasize the importance of fire escape plans.
5. Level-appropriate education should be offered to all children with history of fire-playing behavior. Concurrent education should be available to caregivers, who should not play with fire in front of children nor leave lighters/matches in places accessible by the children.

Additional Resources

There are numerous resources available to the public on fire safety. Below is a list of some of these resources related to smoke alarms and fire prevention.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

This website provides a smoke alarm installation guide and an information sheet on safety tips for smoke alarms all downloadable for free in PDF format.

www.nfpa.org

The Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council

This website provides information on the differences between smoke alarms, smoke alarms facts and other additional information regarding fire safety.

<http://www.firesafetycouncil.com/english/pubsafe.htm>

The Arson Prevention Program for Children (TAPP-C)

This is a partnership program offered by local fire departments and children's mental health professionals in the community. This website provides links to local community fire departments across Ontario.

<http://www.tapp-c.ca>

August 2009



Education Services
Transforming Knowledge into Skills



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies
The voice of child welfare in Ontario