



## Youth Firesetter Program

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## YFS Program Information

The Burn Institute's Youth Firesetter Program (YFS) began as a diversion program in 1989, using education to prevent the youth from continuing to play with fire. Today the YFS program has significantly expanded and advanced. The program incorporates evidence-based risk assessment tools, and education to intervene in the dangerous firesetting 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 **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 database of referrals and assessment results for the juveniles

### 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 the 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 15 and under
- Arson is the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 been referred to the YFS Program, you are asked to contact the Burn Institute within 72 working hours to schedule an appointment. The services are confidential and free.

**Please contact the Youth Firesetter Program Coordinator at 858-541-2277 x 118 or YFS@burninstitute.org.**