



IMPACT OF THE JUVENILE AND FAMILY FIRE AWARENESS PROGRAM

The Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness Program has had a significant impact on families and the community.

"The DFES Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness Program has made a huge difference to the young man in our foster care."

Our foster child told us that he was fascinated with fire and this caused us great concern. Following a visit from a JAFFA Support Officer, our foster child is now very aware of the dangers of fire. We feel that the Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness Program is an extremely worthwhile and valuable community asset which has had a huge influence on our foster son's life."

"I caught my son playing with lighters and aerosol cans on multiple occasions. I was so concerned about his fascination with fire that I rang the local fire department and they provided me with the best program I could ever ask for. The volunteer JAFFA Support Officer came to our home in full uniform and spoke with my son about the consequences of fire. After the visit my son said he would never play with fire again."



FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to enrol your child in the Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness Program or would like further information please contact the Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness Coordinator on **9395 9488** or email: jaffa@dfes.wa.gov.au



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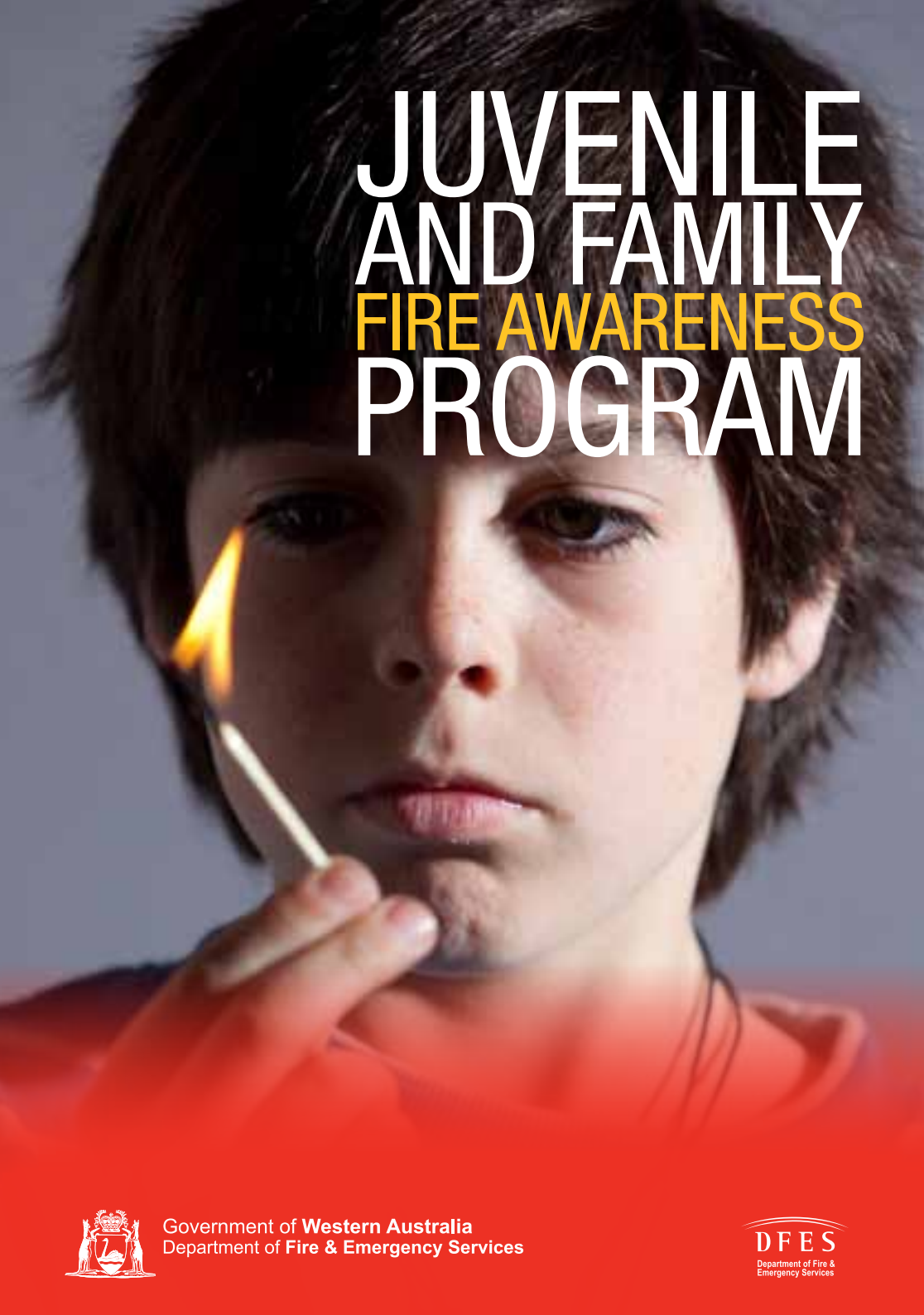
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JUVENILE AND FAMILY FIRE AWARENESS PROGRAM

HELPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO DEVELOP FIRE SAFE SKILLS

The Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness Program (JAFFA) is a free, confidential education and support program for children between the ages of 6 and 16 that have been involved in fire lighting.

The program relies on a group of firefighters that volunteer their time to assist families whose children have been involved in fire lighting.

WHAT THE PROGRAM INVOLVES

JAFFA is an education session that assists children to understand fire behaviour, fire safety and the legal implications of fire lighting.

It alerts them to the dangers of fire play and the long term consequences of sustaining serious burns.

JAFFA is delivered by a specially trained firefighter in the family home. The firefighter conducts an interview with the child and their parents that helps them understand the child's fire lighting behaviour. The firefighter then delivers an education session according to the child's age, maturity and involvement with fire. The session may include watching a DVD, viewing photographs that illustrate the consequences of inappropriate fire use, developing a home fire safety plan or discussing fire behaviour and peer pressure. The session usually takes two to three hours in duration.

Parental involvement in the program is important. Parents and families play a valuable role in creating a supportive environment for their children to learn and adopt new behaviours. Involving the family also reduces the focus on the child and assists parents to understand how to be a good role model for fire safe behaviour.

IS MY CHILD SUITABLE FOR THE PROGRAM?

Most children will show a curiosity towards fire and research suggests that this is a normal developmental phase. In situations where a child's curiosity develops into experimenting with fire, the first step should be parental intervention and discipline. The majority of children will engage in at least one unsupervised fire start and with appropriate parental intervention, children can learn from their actions without the need for a JAFFA education session.

Where parental intervention has been ineffective and the child continues to light fires or show an unusual interest in fire, the JAFFA program can help.

The program is generally not suitable when a child's fire lighting is part of a pattern of antisocial or criminal behaviour, or if it is related to mental health. Our firefighters are not trained as counselors or psychologists.

JAFFA is designed for children between the ages of 6 and 16, however if the child is outside this age group, you can contact DFES for information on alternative options.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS MY CHILD IS PLAYING WITH FIRE?

- Missing matches or lighters
- Matches or lighters in your child's room, pockets or bag
- Burnt items such as paper or garden rubbish
- Burn marks on toys, clothes or bedding
- Burn marks in the house or cubby house
- Smell of something burnt
- Strong interest in fire or continually talking about fire.



WHY IS MY CHILD PLAYING WITH FIRE?

There are many reasons why children light fires. Some of the most common reasons include:

- A fascination with or curiosity about the colour, light and energy released by flames
- Attention seeking behaviour that may be in response to a change in a family situation or pressures resulting from learning or social difficulties
- Peer pressure
- Low self-esteem
- Anger and revenge associated with family or friendship problems, or
- Malicious or mischievous behaviour in response to family or social difficulties.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Supervise your children at all times, specially around fire, cooking and heating.
- Teach your children that fire is a tool not a toy, including that:
 - fire is used for cooking and heating
 - fire is dangerous - it can cause lifelong injuries and may even kill, and
 - all fires (even small ones) can spread quickly.
- Teach your children about fire safety.
- Remove the temptation. Lock away matches and lighters just as you lock away medicines, cleaning fluids and other dangerous household substances.
- Store flammable liquids and combustible materials properly. Never place them close to an ignition source.



- Teach your children to show you any unattended matches and lighters they find. You can then dispose of them and reward their honesty.

- Lead by example. At all times stress the importance of being responsible with fire.

- Install photoelectric smoke alarms in your home and maintain them. Only working smoke alarms save lives. Test the battery monthly and change the battery yearly or install mains powered smoke alarms.

- Ensure that everyone in your home knows what to do if there is a fire. Develop a fire escape plan for your family and practice it. This is an important family strategy as it takes the focus away from the child and involves the whole family.

- Call the Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness program for help and assistance.

FACTS ABOUT CHILD FIRE LIGHTING

- The majority of child fire lighters are boys
- 80% of fires lit by children involve the inappropriate use of cigarette lighters and matches
- It is estimated that children 16 years of age and under are responsible for 20% of bushfires in Australia (Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade)
- Most child fire lighters DO NOT understand the dangers and possible consequences of fire
- Children who play with fire often get hurt.

