



**American
Red Cross**

Greater Rochester Chapter



Dear Teacher,

Welcome to *After the Fire: The Teachable Moment*, a program from Prevention 1st, a non-profit organization dedicated to injury prevention, to help you deal with the trauma of a home fire for children in your classroom. The program also helps you teach fire safety education at the time when children and their families may be most open to receiving that education: after a fire has affected someone they know. Distribution of the program is coordinated through the Greater Rochester Red Cross, as part of its response to all fires in our community.

After the Fire: The Teachable Moment is designed to be flexible, easy to use, and fit readily into your classroom and your schedule. It provides:

- A selection of possible classroom activities for different age groups, from which you can choose to suit your teaching style and your classroom.
- Online tools, games and resources that you can use with your classroom's interactive whiteboard, including the teaching game *Help Mikey Make It Out* and games and story cards from the award-winning *play safe! be safe!* program.
- A variety of take-home family activities and resources.
- Age-appropriate materials, and references to readily available free materials such as books in the Monroe County Library System.

The program includes three learning modules, which can be introduced over time as children process the fire event and are ready to learn behaviors that can prevent fires and keep them and their families safe if a fire occurs in their homes. The modules are:

Module 1-Processing the Event helps children in processing trauma of a fire in their neighborhood or in a classmate's home, and prepares them to be able to address how to stay safe from fire.

Module 2-Fire Survival teaches children specific actions to take if a fire happens in their home, as well as things *not* to do.

Module 3-Fire Prevention teaches children what they and their families can do to prevent a fire in their home, and to be prepared if a fire does happen.

This program brings together the expertise and resources of several community organizations. It was created for Prevention 1st by Fireproof Children, a local fire safety research and training organization with more than 20 years of experience, with input from both educators and firefighters. The Greater Rochester Red Cross, which responds to all fires in our community, coordinate the program with schools and families. The enclosed fire safety reading list was provided by the Children's Center of the Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County.

We hope that *After the Fire: The Teachable Moment* will make it easier for you to help your students deal with a fire, and prevent fires in our community.

Sincerely,

Jack I. Dinaburg, President
Prevention 1st

www.prevention1st.org
www.homefiredrill.org

Richard King, Interim Director
Regional Emergency Services
American Red Cross Finger Lakes Region
www.RochesterRedCross.org

Dale Spafford admits when he first got *After the Fire: The Teachable Moment* from Prevention 1st Foundation, the packet sat on the corner of his desk at Clara Barton School in the city of Rochester, New York. He knew the fire safety information in it was important, but wondered when he could possibly fit it in, especially during the busy beginning of the school year.

Then the day after Columbus Day, he walked into school and his principal told him a student in his sixth-grade class had a fire at home on the holiday.

"I *ran* to that packet," he says now.

Dale gave the boy, who had to move in with his grandmother after the fire, a ride to school. When they arrived, the boy was asked a million questions by his peers, who of course had already heard about the fire. The dialogue had begun, ready or not. Fortunately, Dale was ready, with *After the Fire*.

"I threw out the planned curriculum for the week, because this was too fresh, and too scary," he remembers. "We had to deal with it."

Having checked first with both the boy and his father, Dale asked the boy to describe his experience to his classmates. As they listened to his story, their anxiety showed on their faces. But guided by Dale, they moved on to strategizing what to do if they ever had a fire in their own home—get out when the alarm goes off, check the door, stay low, don't go back inside for anything.

By the end, the boy felt better after talking about the incident, and having the empathy of his classmates. All of the students had dealt with the anxiety the incident created, and started to think about positive steps they could take to prevent a tragedy in their own homes.

Over the next three days, Dale took his class through each of the three modules provided in *After the Fire*: Processing the Event, Fire Survival, and Fire Prevention. Each module includes a short list of suggested classroom activities for different age groups, recommended books and take-home activities for families, and additional resources.

"It helped me as a teacher," Dale says of *After the Fire*. "It gave me the structure for *how* to teach this, instead of me just trying to use what I know."

After the Fire: The Teachable Moment A Teacher's Story

Page 2

He read to his class *A Chair for My Mother*, a book recommended in the Processing module and available in the school library, which describes a family coping with the aftermath of a fire. In the school's computer lab they went to www.homefiredrill.org and used the resources there to learn how to plan and practice a home fire drill, and make sure their home had a working smoke alarm.

These lessons had an immediate effect: kids volunteered the fact that they had gone home and checked their smoke alarms. Several reported having found a lighter and either taken it to a grown-up or, in the case of a lighter found on the street, thrown it in the garbage "so a *little* kid wouldn't find it."

Dale intends to revisit and reinforce these lessons throughout the school year, and his typical curriculum offers opportunities to do so. For example, a book he regularly teaches was written by an African-American poet who became a foster child because he lost his parents in a fire. When he teaches this book of poetry, it will be another opportunity to go over the life-saving lessons from *After the Fire*.

"Thank God I had this program to guide me in talking about a fire, and how to prevent further incidents," he says. "It helped me immensely to deal with something I hadn't had to deal with before in my career. It helped the kids process the event, and they also really internalized the lessons learned. The kids need it. We need it."

He adds: "If I hadn't had the fire, I don't know if I'd feel the same way. But now I want to keep this in my repertoire forever."

Teachers interested in "After the Fire" materials should call Prevention1st at (585) 383-6505.



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After the Fire: The Teachable Moment

Children are especially vulnerable to the trauma of home fire disasters, including the fear created by the event itself, temporarily or permanently being forced from their homes, the loss of beloved personal possessions, and sometimes the grief of losing a family member.

After the Fire: The Teachable Moment helps not only children who have experienced a fire, but their classmates who are in turn affected by the trauma of the event, their teachers, and their families. The program provides prevention education that relieves anxiety and answers questions that arise from children and families about how to protect themselves from fire.

The teaching modules provide age-appropriate materials and classroom activities dealing with fire safety, as well as reading lists. Each child also receives, to take home to parents and family members, a similar reading list for fire prevention, household safety checklists, and at-home activities.

A free download of the teaching modules and reading lists is available at www.prevention1st.org/AftertheFire

In classrooms across our State, teachers and school counselors see the enduring, traumatic results of home fires...I encourage the involvement in this program of all those in a position to disseminate its benefits: teachers, parents, funders, and community volunteers.

Wade Norwood, New York State Board of Regents

Thank God I had this program to guide me in talking about a fire, and how to prevent further incidents. It helped me immensely to deal with something I hadn't had to deal with before in my career. It helped the kids process the event, and they also really internalized the lessons learned. The kids need it. We need it.

Dale Spafford, 6th Grade Lead Teacher, Rochester City School #2 (Clara Barton School)

As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who works with young children, I think this is an excellent packet that seems to cover all that is necessary. The resource lists are equally great!

*Marjorie Beldue
American Red Cross, Greater Rochester Chapter*

After the Fire: The Teachable Moment

Module 1: Processing the Event

A fire in the home is a devastating event that most people never think about until it happens. These tragedies displace families, destroy homes, and take lives. Not only the child directly affected, but classmates as well, are vulnerable to the trauma of home fire. This module is designed to help children in processing the event and prepare them to be ready to learn how to stay safe from fire.

Classroom Activities

Note: Check with your school for referrals to trauma counselors if appropriate. Depending on the nature of the event, and whether it directly affected a child in your classroom, you may choose several ways to help them process the fire.

Several of the suggested activities below use books described further in the *After the Fire* Book List.

(Ages 4-8)

- Read the book *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera Williams. Ask the class:
 - How do you think the girl felt when her house burned?
 - How do you think she felt about moving to the apartment?
 - How do you think she's feeling now?
- Another excellent book for discussion with this age group is *The Fire* by Annette Griessman.

(Ages 9-11)

- Talk about your own feelings about the fire that happened in your community, e.g. you were scared, you were relieved no one was hurt.
- If children start to talk about the fire, ask them about their own thoughts and feelings.
- The book *Fire! My Parents' Story* by Jessie Haas is a good book for discussion with this age group, a true account of a fire in a rural farm house in 1948. Also introduces materials on preparedness.

Take-Home Activities and Materials for Parents:

- Encourage families not to be afraid to talk with their child about the fire, and their thoughts and feelings about it.
- *Helping Young Children Cope With Trauma* (American Red Cross), available from <http://www.njredcross.org/safetycenter/childcope.pdf>

After the Fire: The Teachable Moment

Module 2: Fire Survival

This module is designed to teach children specific actions to take if a fire happens in their home, as well as things *not* to do.

Suggested Classroom Activities

Several of these suggested activities use books which are described further in the *After the Fire* Book List. The first activity uses the *play safe! be safe!* classroom kit developed by BIC Corporation. These story cards are also available free online in English, French and Spanish at www.playsafebesafe.com.

(Ages 4-8)

- Show the class the *play safe! be safe!* story cards for lessons 2 (*Stop Drop and Roll*), and lesson 3 (*Crawl Low under Smoke*), and ask them the questions on the back.
- Read the book *No Dragons for Tea* (ages 4 – 7; see Book List), and ask the class:
 - What did the little girl do when the smoke alarm rang?
 - What mistakes did the dragon make after the smoke alarm rang?
 - What did they do when they got outside?
- Read the class the book *Safety Around Fire* (ages 6 – 9; see Book List) by Lucia Raatma (pages 7-17 focus on fire survival). Ask them:
 - What can cause fires?
 - What should they do around the stove? What shouldn't they do?
 - What should they do around outdoor grills?
 - When does their family use candles? What should they do around candles?
 - What should they do if fire gets on their clothes?
- Read the class *Crawl Low Under Smoke* (ages 6 – 9) by Lucia Raatma, and do the "hands on" activity at the back of the book: have children hold a stick first at five feet above the ground, then at two feet. Pretending the stick is smoke, each child takes turns going under the smoke.
- Read the class *Stop, Drop, and Roll* (ages 5 – 8) by Margery Cuyler, and have them practice the activity (This story also shows the value of kids learning in school and taking the messages home – Jessica's mom and dad follow through and improve home safety).

(Ages 9-11)

- Ask the class what to do in case of a fire: get out right away; go to the meeting place; call 911 from outside; wait for the fire service.
- Ask them what they should *not* do: try to put the fire out; go back in to get their pet.
- Write down what they say. Reinforce the accurate responses, and correct or improve responses.
- Ask if they have a younger brother or sister, what would they tell them about what to do if there's a fire.
- Continue reading *Fire! My Parents Story* (see Module 1). It brings to life the importance of preparing for and being ready to escape a fire.

Take-home Activities:

- 'Plan and practice a home fire drill/Have smoke alarms that work' is a full-color, two-sided illustrated checklist (Also available for download at www.prevention1st.org).
- Encourage the children to talk with their parents about planning and practicing a home fire drill.

Additional Resources:

Help Mikey Make It Out is an interactive animated game available at www.homefiredrill.org that children and their parents can use together to learn what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. By helping Mikey escape, they learn to check the door before going out into the hallway, not to go out if there is smoke in the hallway, to crawl low under smoke, get out and stay out, and go to a family meeting place. The game can be played over and over, because just like in real life, different things may happen! The door may be cool or hot, there may or may not be smoke in the hallway.

After the Fire: The Teachable Moment

Module 3: Fire Prevention

This module teaches children what they and their families can do to make sure a fire doesn't happen in their home, and how to make sure they're prepared if a fire does happen.

Suggested Classroom Activities

Several of these suggested activities use books which are described further in the *After the Fire* Book List. The first activity uses the *play safe! be safe!* classroom kit developed by BIC Corporation. These story cards are also available free online in English, French and Spanish at www.playsafebesafe.com.

(Ages 4-8)

- Show the class the *play safe! be safe!* story cards for lesson 4 (Matches and lighters are adult tools, Tell a grown-up) and ask them the questions on the back.
- Read the class the book *Mikey Makes a Mess* by Carolyn Kourofsky, and ask:
 - What did Mikey find?
 - What did Mikey's dad learn?
 - What should *you* do if you find matches or lighters?
- Read the class the book *Safety Around Fire* (ages 6- 9; pages 19-22 focus on fire prevention and escape planning) or *Fire Safety* (ages 6 – 9) both by Lucia Raatma.

(Ages 9-11)

- Ask the class what they think poses fire risks in their homes, school or community, e.g. playing with matches or lighters; candles; cooking; gasoline or other flammable liquids; smoking in bed.
- List the fire risks on the board as they are given by the students.
- Now ask students to work in groups of 3 or 4 to come up with some safety practices that will prevent these fires.
- List the practices as each group reports out, reinforce their suggestions, and enhance them if necessary.
- End by asking them to help keep their own homes and families safe by sharing information with their families, implementing some of the fire prevention practices.
- Finish reading *Fire! My Parents Story* (see Module 1) and discuss fire preparedness.

Take-home Activities and Materials:

- Count the smoke alarms in your home. Ask your mom or dad to test the smoke alarms.
- Home Fire Safety Checklist: Do a home fire safety inspection (Fireproof Children)
- Plan your escape. How would you get out of your home if there were a fire? Go to www.homefiredrill.org to learn more.

Additional Resources

- *Home Fire Drill: Does Your Family Know What to Do?* Featuring two Rochester, NY families, this real-life demonstration shows why many families are not as prepared as they believe to escape their home in a fire, and how to plan and practice a home fire drill (Available at www.homefiredrill.org)
- Falls Prevention Checklist (Home Safety Council)
- Poison Prevention Checklist (Home Safety Council)

After the Fire: The Teachable Moment Book List

Fiction

Bridwell, Norman. *Clifford the Firehouse Dog*

Clifford, the big red dog, visits his brother Nero, a fire safety dog, and helps the firemen put out a fire. Includes “Clifford’s Fire Safety Rules”. Ages 4-7

Brown, Marc. *Arthur’s Fire Drill*

Arthur helps ease D.W.’s fire fears by practicing fire drills at home. Ages 5-7

Cuyler, Margery. *Stop, Drop and Roll*

In this humorous story Jessica the worrywart is nervous because her family hasn’t followed any of the fire prevention and fire safety tips she learns about in school. Thanks to her they make some changes and Jessica learns that being prepared is the best way to cure her fears. Ages 5-8

DeSimini, Lisa. *Dot the Fire Dog*

Dot the Dalmatian that lives at a firehouse accompanies the firefighters when they rush to a burning house. The final pages offer “Dot’s Fire Safety Tips” for adults and children to talk about together. Ages 3-7

Griessman, Annette. *The Fire*

When their house is destroyed by fire and everything is lost except a stuffed bear and a family photograph, Mama reminds Maria and Pepito that they still have their most important possessions—each other. Ages 5-8

Harper, Jamie. *Miss Mingo and the Fire Drill*

Stop! Drop! Roll! Learning the rules of fire safety is a lot more fun (and less scary) when demonstrated by a charming and diverse group of animals. Ages 4-8

Kourofsky, Carolyn. *Mikey Makes a Mess.*

Mikey learns that leaving his toys in the middle of the floor is hazardous while his father is reminded that leaving matches lying around is equally dangerous. Includes questions for children and safety tips for parents. In English and Spanish. Ages 4-7.

Krensky, Stephen. *Spark the Firefighter*

Spark’s fear of fire has kept him from being a proper dragon. He takes a job with the Hardscrabble volunteer fire department in hopes of conquering his fear and becomes a hero. Ages 4-6

Pendziwol, Jean. *No Dragons for Tea: Fire Safety for Kids (and Dragons)*

A girl’s dragon friend accidentally sets the house on fire when he comes for tea. But she and her mom remember all the important fire safety tips and rescue themselves and the panicky dragon. The book concludes with a catchy fire safety rhyme and a fire safety checklist for adults. Ages 4 -7

Williams, Vera. *A Chair for My Mother*

The fire destroyed all their furniture, but thanks to family and friends a girl, her mother and grandmother have the basics they need in a new apartment. Now they’re saving all their spare change in a big jar to buy a comfy armchair. Ages 5- 8

Non-Fiction

Boelts, Maribeth. *A Kid’s Guide to Staying Safe around Fire*

Discusses preventing fires, developing a family exit plan, and what to do in case a fire starts. Ages 6-9

Fortney, Mary. *Fire Station Number 4: the daily life of firefighters*

Describes the various activities performed every day by firefighters in suburban San Francisco. Concludes with two pages of fire safety rules. Ages 7-10

Non-Fiction, continued

Gibbons, Gail. *Fire! Fire!*

Views fire fighters fighting fires in the city, the country, the forest and on the waterfront. Two final pages give fire prevention tips and explain what to do in case of fire. Ages 6-8.

Haas, Jessie. *Fire! My Parents' Story*

Eight year old Patty is the one who discovers the fire in her family's isolated farmhouse in 1948 in this compelling true account. Everyone survives and life goes forward, although the house is destroyed and their lives disrupted. Ages 8-12

Kuklin, Susan. *Fighting Fires*

Text and photographs present the vehicles, equipment, and procedures used by fire fighters. A final page gives brief fire safety tips. Ages 6-9

Marzollo, Jean. *I am Fire*

A brief, simple text explains the difference between good fire, used safely for cooking and providing warmth, and bad fire, which can cause burns or destroy property. Offers basic fire safety tips. Ages 3-6

Miller, Edward. *Fireboy to the Rescue!*

Fireboy gives tips on preventing fires and staying safe if a fire does start. Ages 4-8.

Mudd-Ruth, Maria. *Firefighting: Behind the Scenes*

An in-depth look at the challenging and dangerous work performed by firefighters, including their training, equipment, life at the firehouse and firefighting techniques. A final chapter discusses fire prevention and safety. Ages 8-10

Raatma, Lucia. *Crawl Low under Smoke*

Explains how to leave a building safely during a fire, emphasizing staying low to avoid smoke and using alternate ways out. Part of the Fire Safety series. Ages 6-9

Raatma, Lucia. *Fire Safety*

Full color photographs illustrate chapters on how fires start, preventing fires, preparing for a possible fire, and what to do in case of fire. Ages 8-10

Raatma, Lucia. *Home Fire Drills*

Explains what to do in case of a fire in your house and tells how practicing fire drills can help you to be safe. Part of the Fire Safety series. Ages 6-9

Raatma, Lucia. *Safety around Fire*

Describes good versus bad fire; how to stay safe around indoor and outdoor fires, and how to plan a family escape route. Part of the Safety First! series. Ages 6-9

Raatma, Lucia. *Smoke Alarms*

Discusses the importance of having smoke detectors in the home, the different kinds of detectors and how they work, and what to do when they sound. Part of the Fire Safety series. Ages 6-9

Raatma, Lucia. *Stop, Drop, and Roll*

Describes how to react safely if your clothes are on fire by stopping, dropping to the ground or floor, and rolling to put out the fire. Part of the Fire Safety series. Ages 6-9.



**After the Fire: The Teachable Moment
Books in Spanish**

Bridwell, Norman. *Clifford el perro bombero*

Kourofsky, Carolyn. *Mikey hace un desorden*

Williams, Vera B. *Un Sillón Para Mi Mamá*