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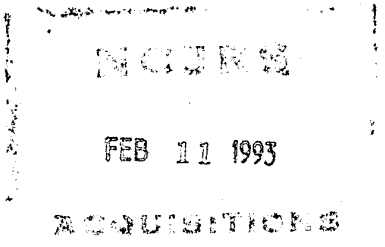
Juvenile Firesetter/Arson Control and Prevention Program

Volume I:

Guidelines for Implementation



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Introduction

The problem of juvenile firesetting and arson is a costly, sometimes deadly, problem. Fires set by juveniles take a tremendous toll in property losses, personal injuries, and death each year in this country. Whether the result of a curious child playing with matches or the malicious act of a troubled delinquent, juvenile firesetting is a serious and vexing problem that requires a special response from the community and the criminal justice system. Indeed, juvenile firesetting and arson are committed more out of ignorance than malice by youths who are more troubled than criminal. But fires are also set by mean-spirited delinquents with histories of crime and violence; the justice system must deal firmly with such youths.

Several years ago, as statistics began to reveal the magnitude of the juvenile arson problem, a few innovative officials recognized that the unique elements of juvenile firesetting required the development of strategies that go beyond the traditional capabilities of the law enforcement establishment. New approaches to screening and counseling would have to be developed, applying techniques especially suited to youths and drawing on the resources of multiple disciplines in the community. Although scores of programs have now been developed across the country, there has been virtually no careful examination of the juvenile firesetting problem or the programs designed to address it.

In recognition of the seriousness of the juvenile firesetting problem, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in conjunction with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) is sponsoring the National Juvenile Firesetter/Arson Control and Prevention Program being conducted by the Institute for Social Analysis (ISA) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). The purpose of this development program is to assess, develop, test, and disseminate information on promising approaches for the control and prevention of juvenile firesetting and arson.

The two-year program, which began in early 1988, is divided into four incremental stages:

1. An assessment of the incidence and dynamics of juvenile firesetting/arson and selected juvenile firesetter programs throughout the United States.

2. The development of a comprehensive approach to controlling juvenile arson, including descriptions of program development, implementation, and operation.

3. The development of training and technical assistance packages to provide local jurisdictions with the necessary information to implement appropriate programs.

4. Testing and dissemination of the training and technical assistance packages.

ISA will be assisted during the development project by the National Juvenile Arson Public/Private Partnership, a group composed of diverse individuals from both the public and private sector who have a special expertise and interest in juvenile arson. Following the development project, the juvenile arson program prototypes will be tested in selected jurisdictions.

The following materials represent the culmination of the Prototype Development Stage (Stage II) of the program. The prototype program has seven components which include: 1) Program Management; 2) Screening, Evaluating and Developing the Intervention Plan; 3) Intervention Services; 4) Referral Mechanisms 5) Publicity and Outreach; 6) Monitoring Systems; and 7) Developing Relationships with the Justice System. The components are designed to be flexible and their exact implementation will differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. This modular approach allows jurisdictions to develop or expand a juvenile firesetter program which meets their particular needs using the resources available. Jurisdictions may draw on selected components (e.g. referral mechanisms, monitoring systems, etc.) to augment an existing juvenile firesetter program or use the information to assist in creating a new program. Each component presents a wide range of approaches which vary according to their impact and the resources required for implementation. Thus the materials allow maximum adaptability for virtually any

jurisdiction to develop a juvenile firesetter prevention program tailored to their specific requirements.

The components provide detailed information about the each of the areas noted above. Below are brief descriptions of the components:

Program Management. The Program Management component provides information on program structure, staffing, training, and funding. In addition, the component presents planning and coordination strategies which include, establishing interagency links, creating a coordinating council, and conducting a juvenile firesetter prevention workshop. As with all of the components, this component discusses the jurisdictional characteristics which need to be considered when the jurisdiction is deciding on the best approach to alleviating their juvenile firesetting problem.

Screening, Evaluating, and Developing the Intervention Plan. The second component summarizes a wide variety of screening and evaluation procedures used by the fire service, law enforcement, probation and juvenile justice, mental health, and schools. The procedures are described in terms of their function, target population, users, content, benefits, and limitations. Decision grids are provided to help users select the most appropriate methods for their service needs.

Intervention Services. The Intervention Services component provides information on three levels of intervention strategies - primary prevention, early intervention, and core intervention - which are aimed at reducing juvenile involvement in the entire range of unsupervised fireplay and firesetting activities. Each of the strategies have specific intervention objectives and are aimed at particular target populations. A wide variety of intervention strategies used by various agencies are discussed. For each level of intervention, decision grids are presented to help program managers select the best intervention options to meet the needs of their target population.

Referral Mechanisms. The Referral Mechanisms component highlights the need for the juvenile firesetter program to have strong links with other agencies. The component describes how the program can identify referral sources and target referral agencies. In addition the component outlines strategies for establishing links between the program and these agencies.

Publicity and Outreach. This component describes how juvenile firesetter programs can develop a public information and education campaign to raise the public awareness about juvenile firesetting and the juvenile firesetting program. Various strategies including, brochures, newspaper, T.V. and radio exposure, public service announcements, and speakers bureaus are discussed.

Monitoring Systems. The purpose, content, format, and use of systems for monitoring juvenile firesetter programs are covered in this component. Three types of monitoring systems are summarized - management information systems, evaluation systems, and incident reporting systems. The component describes a wide range of possible monitoring systems, from manual, paper and pencil systems to computerized systems.

Developing Relationships with the Justice System. The purpose of this component is to provide information to assist programs in developing effective relationships with the justice system. The component highlights strategies the juvenile firesetter program can use to establish relationships with the probation department, law enforcement, legal, and judicial community, and correctional institutions. In addition the component contains detailed information about three specific programs - Rochester, New York; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Portland, Oregon.

The prototype program which is described in this guidebook should be considered a "product in progress." The information contained in the components will be the building blocks of the Training and Technical Assistance Package which will be developed and tested as part of Stage III.

Component 1

Program Management

Program Management

Purpose

The purpose of the Program Management Component is to present an overview of how a juvenile firesetter program should appear -- providing the shell within which program services are provided. This overview will include a discussion of where the program should be located, how it should be staffed, how its staff should be trained, and how funds may be raised. In addition this component will describe some of the initial steps in starting a juvenile firesetter program and discuss how to establish links between the program and other community agencies.

The other components presented in this manual will describe how particular elements of the program (e.g., screening, intervention, referral, etc.) should operate. It is clear that no single approach is appropriate for every jurisdiction. Each fire district differs with respect to their juvenile firesetter problem and the resources available to combat the problem. To address these varying needs, each component will provide alternative ways to implement the component depending on jurisdictional needs and resources.

Although this component will concentrate on describing the structure of the juvenile firesetter program and will focus primarily on the fire service, it does not mean to indicate that the problem of juvenile firesetting is a fire service problem. Juvenile firesetting is a community problem that requires the resources of the entire community. This component, and others, will explain how to establish links and working relationships with key referral sources and target referral agencies. The fire service and the juvenile firesetter program are part of a network of key agencies that need to work together to address the juvenile firesetter problem.

Background

It is estimated that approximately 40% of all arsons are set by juveniles. These fires cause hundreds of millions of dollars in damages annually and thousands of needless injuries and deaths. The rate of juvenile fireplay and firesetting -- short of arson as determined by fire investigators -- may also be quite high. Studies have shown that the majority of normal children possess an interest in fire and nearly half have engaged in fireplay. While the majority of the child set fires are set out of curiosity, not malice, the damage they cause, both in economic and human costs, are real and devastating.

During the last decade, hundreds of programs have been established across the nation to address the growing concern about juvenile firesetting. These programs are housed primarily within the fire service and are designed to identify, evaluate, and treat the juvenile firesetter to prevent the recurrence of firesetting. Early programs were developed by local mental health professionals and fire service personnel. More recently established programs have been aided by Federal efforts and have been based on models developed by the U.S. Fire Administration.

Juvenile firesetter programs receive referrals from the fire departments, police departments, schools, parents, social service and mental health agencies, and justice agencies. These programs often have working relationships with some of these key agencies, but rarely do they have working relationships with all of the essential community agencies. The number and range of referrals to the programs from outside agencies and the effectiveness of referrals to these agencies depends largely on how the program is established and how strong the links between the program and the agencies are.

Program planning

Juvenile firesetter programs often originate out of the concern of one inspired individual. These individuals may be members of the fire service who have a genuine interest in children or have seen, first hand, the damage and pain caused by juvenile

firesetting. (If a program is established, they often serve as program coordinators). Once the interest is generated, the next step is to acquire a detailed understanding of the juvenile firesetter problem in the particular jurisdiction. Local fire departments are the first place to go to obtain the necessary information. Fire incident reports, arson investigation reports, and other records should provide data on the extent and nature of the juvenile firesetter problem. Information on property loss, injuries and deaths, if available, give added meaning to the numbers. Additional information and arrest data is often available from hospital burn units and police departments.

Once data on the extent of the local juvenile firesetter problem is collected, the person interested in the problem will need to meet with fire chiefs, community representatives, local city councils, and others to determine if the magnitude of the juvenile firesetting problem constitute a serious enough issue to warrant community action. These meetings often center around: (1) the cost of the problem versus the cost of the solution, (2) whether fires set by juveniles are a significant proportion of the fires set in the community and (3) whether juveniles firesetters are overrepresented given the proportion of juveniles in the community. Deciding whether the issue of juvenile firesetting is a significant problem will probably take many meetings and discussions.

If juvenile firesetting is not considered a problem, the path is easy. If, however, the community decides that juvenile firesetting is a threat to the community that needs to be addressed, the next issue is deciding how to address the problem. The community may decide that the problem is severe enough to establish a complete juvenile firesetter program. Communities wishing to implement such a program can use the guidelines described in these components and can seek assistance from other juvenile firesetter programs. If a separate juvenile firesetter program is beyond the resources of a particular community, the fire service may choose to bolster existing programs by implementing one or more of the components. Each jurisdiction is unique and has their own unique problems and resources. Only the members of that community can decide what constitutes a serious problem and which strategies will be most effective to address the problem.

Program Structure

If the members of the community feel that the juvenile firesetter program is serious enough to warrant a juvenile firesetter program, they must decide what kind of program would best serve their jurisdictional needs and then develop such a program. The following sections are designed to provide information on how to establish a juvenile firesetter program. The remainder of this component provides on such issues as location, staffing, training, funding, and establishing interagency links.

Location

Fire Service. The primary site for a juvenile firesetter program should be within the fire service. The results of the Institute for Social Analysis' (ISA) survey of juvenile firesetter programs throughout the country reveal that 87% of the programs are administered by the fire service. These programs are located in different branches of the fire service, including the Office of the Fire Chief, Fire Investigation, and the Fire Marshal. The primary reason why juvenile firesetter programs should be established within the fire service is the fire service's capacity to identify large numbers of firesetters. The fire service is usually the first agency to respond to a fire and many of the firesetters are identified at the scene. Indeed, the majority of juvenile firesetter referrals to existing programs are from within the fire service, usually followed by parents and then schools and mental health organizations.

The fire service's knowledge of fire cause and origin facilitates their ability to identify youthful firesetters. The fire service can track a case from the identification of the firesetter through the fire investigation, assessment, and intervention (education, counseling, prosecution, etc.). In addition, many fire departments have established links with some of the crucial referral agencies. In the course of their investigations, fire investigators often communicate with police, probation, social service, and justice personnel. These links are vitally important to the success of a juvenile firesetter program (see the Referral Mechanisms Component).

Although the overwhelming majority of juvenile firesetter programs are housed within the fire service, there is still some concern that such a program will fall prey to departmental politics. The greatest concern is that the program would be terminated when the Fire Chief who instituted it leaves. Most departments feel that a juvenile firesetter program is too valuable to have such a tenuous existence. Another concern is that firefighters and investigators may be hesitant to use the juvenile firesetter program. To overcome these potential problems, juvenile firesetter programs must be institutionalized within the fire service. Their existence can not rely solely on the motivation and drive of one individual. To survive, the juvenile firesetter program must receive support from all levels within the fire service and community.

To gain the support of all the fire service personnel, the program director should brief the chief and all the division heads about the juvenile firesetter program. Brief memos can be circulated to each fire service division describing the juvenile firesetter program services. Each firefighter, fire investigator, fire educator, etc. should know about the program and understand how it works. The Publicity and Outreach component will describe how to inform the general public about the juvenile firesetter program.

Private agencies. Some fire departments do not have the resources to manage a juvenile firesetter program. The need for such a program, however, may still exist. Many of these jurisdictions have solved this problem by establishing private agencies to run the juvenile firesetter program. Examples of such programs are: 1) The Cease Fire Club, a community-based, non-profit organization in Houston, Texas; and 2) Fight Fire With Care (FFWC) in Ft. Worth, Texas. The FFWC program is directed by fire service personnel but receives all of its funding from local businesses. Juveniles are referred to the program by the fire service, probation, mental health agencies, and parents.

Mental health agencies. Juvenile firesetter programs may be established by mental health or counseling agencies. These agencies have the ability to address the needs of children who require counseling in addition to fire safety education. Most often, however, mental health agencies are part of the referral network and serve as a resource to the

juvenile firesetter program. Usually, juvenile firesetters are identified by the fire service and, as needed, are referred for mental health services.

The greatest concern surrounding programs housed outside of the fire service is that some firesetters may not be referred to the program or may refuse to participate. The fire service has the unique ability to identify and track all juvenile firesetters. Private agencies often do not have access to fire department records and have no way of knowing what percentage of firesetters receive their services. In addition, as noted earlier, the fire department investigators in many programs work with the probation department to require juveniles to participate in the juvenile firesetter program in lieu of prosecution or as a condition of probation. If the juvenile firesetter program is managed by an agency outside of the fire service, that agency needs to work closely with the fire service personnel to ensure that all firesetters are screened and evaluated and receive the services they need.

Multi-jurisdictional approach

The majority of the juvenile firesetter programs surveyed by ISA functioned at the local level. A number of programs, however, are considering a multi-jurisdictional or county-wide approach. One of the greatest advantages of such an approach is that many of the referral agencies that work with the juvenile firesetter program (e.g., mental health, probation, juvenile court, etc.) are county, not local, agencies. A multi-jurisdictional program may span many towns and allows these communities to combine their resources instead of competing for the limited resources of county agencies with whom they work.

The multi-jurisdictional approach, however, requires additional planning and coordinating. The program should be housed in a central fire service agency. In many cases, the County or State Fire Marshal's office is the agency selected to house the program. The juvenile firesetter program will need to establish detailed guideline for referral and feedback to each fire department/station within the juvenile firesetter program jurisdiction. Each fire department/station within the jurisdiction served by the program should be briefed about the program's purpose and services. As is true for local juvenile

firesetter programs, the multi-jurisdictional program will be responsible for assessment, intervention, referral, case tracking and follow-up.

The feasibility of a multi-jurisdictional program will be based on the extent of the juvenile firesetter problem in a given jurisdiction and the resources available to ameliorate the problem. In some cases, the structure of the fire service or referral agencies may make such an approach untenable. Each jurisdiction will need to assess which approach is most appropriate to meet the needs of the community.

Staffing and Responsibilities

Fire Service Personnel. Programs located within the fire service should be coordinated by an individual with a genuine interest in the juvenile firesetter issue. Ideally that individual should be a senior ranking fire official. As noted earlier, programs need support from the highest level in the fire service. Many programs are administered by the Office of the Fire Chief or Fire Marshal with the coordinators answering directly to the Fire Chief or Fire Marshal. The coordinators would be responsible for the day-to-day activities of the juvenile firesetter program. They would be in charge of assessment and intervention, either directly or by supervising others who are assigned to provide the assessment and intervention services. The coordinators would also be primarily responsible for facilitating communication between the juvenile firesetter program and other agencies. The coordinators should be viewed as managers who are responsible for not only the mechanics of running the juvenile firesetter program, but also for the leadership and direction of the program.

In larger departments, additional fire service staff should also be assigned to the program. Firefighters, fire investigators, and fire educators can provide screening and evaluation services, fire education, and referral services. Firefighters who have received specialized training may serve as "buddies" for firesetters who need a role model to provide one-to-one attention and guidance as part of the juvenile firesetter program. Fire service personnel can also be trained to screen juvenile firesetters using standard screening

instruments. In addition, fire service personnel can provide fire safety education to juvenile firesetters and, in some cases, provide "counseling" using techniques designed for use with firesetters (See Intervention Services Component). Many fire departments employ fire educators who have the responsibility to teach fire safety in the schools. Providing fire safety education to the juvenile firesetters is often seen as an extension of that responsibility.

There is some question as to which fire service division is best suited to manage a juvenile firesetter program. Some programs, such as Rochester, New York's FRY program, are run by fire investigators. In the FRY program, investigators identify the juvenile firesetter and provide fire safety education. They also refer firesetters to other agencies (e.g., justice, social service, and mental health) if necessary and track the progress of the firesetter. Other programs may be housed in the Fire Marshal's Office or in the Department of Fire Safety Education. Once the firesetters are identified by the firefighters or fire investigators, they are referred to the juvenile firesetter program for screening, education, and referral.

Either approach can work as long as there is clear communication between the referral division (or outside agency) and the juvenile firesetter program. Problems have developed when fire investigators or firefighters refer juveniles to the juvenile firesetter program and fail to hear about the outcome of the case. The juvenile firesetter program needs to develop strategies to provide feedback to referral sources. Examples of these strategies will be described in the Referral Mechanisms Component. Effective communication between referral sources and the juvenile firesetter program can avert many problems.

Non-fire service personnel. Some fire departments do not have the resources to staff a juvenile firesetter program. In such cases, the program can be run by trained mental health counselors or community volunteers. These counselors and community volunteers would have the same responsibilities as their fire service counterparts. In addition, the mental health counselors are trained to provide in-depth counseling to more troubled

firesetters. Non-fire service personnel would need additional training in fire safety education before providing such education to juvenile firesetters.

Staffing Issues and Concerns

The staffing structure presented above can be implemented by jurisdictions that have the manpower resources available to staff a juvenile firesetter program. Smaller jurisdictions, however, may not have the resources or the need to establish an actual juvenile firesetter program. These jurisdictions may simply want to incorporate some of the services provided by a juvenile firesetter program into existing agencies. Although it is recommended that jurisdictions establish a "program" within the fire department, an alternative possibility for some jurisdictions is to have interested people in various agencies take on the responsibilities of the juvenile firesetter program staff. These individuals would be responsible for assessment, education, referral, and tracking.

Jurisdictions must also decide whether the juvenile firesetter program will be operated by full-time or part-time staff and whether the staff will be paid or volunteer. Ideally, a juvenile firesetter program should be staffed by at least one full-time, paid fire service employee. Many fire departments have separate budgets for the juvenile firesetter program, which includes full-time personnel. In other jurisdictions, fire service personnel provide juvenile firesetter assessment, education, and referral in addition to other responsibilities, such as, fire investigations, fire inspections, or school fire safety education. Still other jurisdictions rely entirely on fire service personnel who volunteer their off-duty time to help provide assessment and education to juvenile firesetters. (In later sections, this component will discuss liability concerns surrounding the practice of having paid fire service personnel volunteer their time to the juvenile firesetter program).

Funding and staffing decisions for each jurisdiction should be based on an assessment of the jurisdiction's juvenile firesetter problem and the resources available. Fire service personnel will need to look at the incidence of juvenile firesetting in their jurisdiction and

the cost in terms of property damage and personal injury. In addition, the fire service will need to estimate the cost per case for assessment and intervention services for a juvenile firesetter.

Training

Regardless of the staff background, all program staff should receive training in juvenile firesetting and child related issues. At a minimum, the training should include the following topics:

Characteristics of juvenile firesetters
How to identify juvenile firesetters
Developing and managing a juvenile firesetter program
Screening/assessment techniques
Interviewing and educating the juvenile firesetter
Referral and follow-up
Normal child development
Juvenile delinquency
Child Abuse/Neglect
Legal Issues

National experts in the field of juvenile firesetting can provide training in the characteristics of juvenile firesetters and information on how to identify, assess, interview, educate, and refer firesetters. Local fire service personnel can provide specific information about the jurisdiction's juvenile firesetter problem.

Personnel from local social services agencies and mental health facilities can provide training in child related issues, such as child development, delinquency, abuse, and neglect. Training in these child related issues is important to understanding juvenile firesetters. For example, in some cases, more seriously disturbed firesetters engage in other acts of juvenile delinquency. In other cases, youth will set a fire to draw attention to parental abuse or

neglect. Juvenile firesetters represent a broad spectrum of youth, from developmentally normal children who are simply curious about fire to very seriously disturbed youth who require specialized treatment. The juvenile firesetter staff need this diverse training because they will come in contact with a wide range of juveniles in the course of their work.

Information about the legal issues surrounding juvenile firesetting can be obtained through the local prosecutor's office. Program staff need to be aware of the arson laws, including the age of accountability. The staff should also know how juvenile firesetters are handled by the justice system

Once the juvenile firesetter program has been established and the program staff have received training, the program coordinator or other staff should provide an orientation to all fire service personnel, especially arson investigators and upper level command staff. This may be done in the from of an in-service meeting or one day seminar. (If the resources are available, these personnel may also be included in the training seminar). All fire service personnel should be aware of the program and the services it provides. In addition, all fire service personnel should understand the procedures used to refer a firesetter to the program. Questions and concerns of the fire service personnel about the program should be addressed at this time.

In addition to the fire service orientation, the program coordinator should prepare briefings for the Chief and Deputy Chief to enhance their understanding of the problem and gain their support. As the program continues, the coordinator should provide the Chief and Deputy Chief with brief updates on the progress of the juvenile firesetter program.

Funding

As noted earlier, the nature and extent of any juvenile firesetter program will depend, to a large, extent on the resources available to the program. Programs with limited money and manpower have gone to the community to acquire the necessary services,

materials, and funds. The community can offer an unlimited wealth of resources. Corporations may contribute money or sponsor specific activities or products. When looking for corporate donations, juvenile firesetter program staff should appeal to the corporation's sense of civic mindedness and self-interest. Contributing money to better the community and help eliminate a costly and deadly problem is basically good business. The juvenile firesetter program should consider establishing local public/private partnerships. These partnerships, which include representatives from local businesses and public agencies (such as the fire service), have been useful in other government programs. Local businesses can donate more than money or equipment -- they can contribute their management, fund-raising expertise, and other in-kind contributions.

One potential resource for the juvenile firesetter program is local insurance companies. Where they may not always be able to offer monetary contributions, they may be able to provide in-kind assistance. Several juvenile firesetter programs have received generous help for the insurance industry regarding public relations activities, such as, printing brochures or publishing an article on the problem of juvenile firesetting and the promising program solutions. Insurance agencies can be a valuable resource because they have a vested interest in facilitating the reduction of juvenile firesetting.

Prior to approaching insurance agencies or other local businesses, the juvenile firesetter program should gather as much statistical information as possible about the juvenile firesetter problem in their community. Information about the cost of juvenile firesetting in economic and human terms will help support funding efforts. The most important element of juvenile firesetting that needs to be stressed is that the problem is a community problem that cannot be alleviated without the assistance of the community.

One additional source of funding can be investigated by the juvenile firesetter program. In some jurisdictions the restitution paid by a juvenile firesetter as part of a court sentence is not claimed by the insurance industry. Often this is because the cost of claiming that money is more than the actual amount of the restitution. The program coordinator

should talk to the court and the insurance agencies about the possibility of earmarking those funds for the juvenile firesetter program.

Liability

Another financial (and legal) concern is the issue of liability. Liability refers to the potential for programs or referral agencies to be "at risk" for legal action because of the actions of a juvenile firesetter. Program staff need to take steps to insure that referral agencies will not be held liable for the actions of the juveniles referred to them. Liability waiver forms are often used to counter these concerns. The liability waivers should be reviewed by attorneys to make sure they address all the concerns of the juvenile firesetter program and the referral agencies. Parents will need to read and sign these waivers (which usually release the program or the referral agencies from responsibility for the action of their children). The juvenile firesetter program and the program's referral agencies need to be able to address the needs of the firesetters but will be limited if they are going to be held accountable for the actions of the firesetter.

Another liability issue arises when fire service personnel volunteer their time to work with juvenile firesetters. As mentioned earlier, paid fire service personnel sometimes volunteer their time to assist juvenile firesetters. The new Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) may limit this practice. Many states are interpreting the FLSA to mean that the fire service is liable for fire service personnel when they are conducting fire service related activities regardless of whether they are on- or off-duty. Juvenile firesetter programs that use volunteers from the fire service as part of their program need to carefully review their state's interpretation of the FLSA and how it affects the program.

How to establish interagency links

Regardless of how the fire service or other agency chooses to tackle the juvenile firesetter problem, they will need the assistance of the key community agencies which work with juveniles (e.g., police, probation, justice, schools, mental health, and social services).

The following section will describe techniques for gaining support from these community agencies and establishing interagency relationships

Coordinating Council. Strong interagency relationships and referral networks are vital when establishing a juvenile firesetter program. Because these relationships are so critical to the success of a program, the creation of a coordinating council is essential. Such coordinating councils or task forces have been established in Portland, Oregon; Upper Arlington, Ohio; and other programs around the country. The juvenile firesetter program coordinating council should be composed of representatives from all agencies in the jurisdiction whose responsibilities relate to juvenile firesetters. At a minimum, the council should include representatives from the fire service, police, probation, juvenile court, children's protective services, district attorney's office, schools, and mental health agencies. These agencies represent the avenues through which juveniles are referred to the juvenile firesetter program, as well as, resources for the program. Including all of the key agencies on the coordinating council will ensure that no juvenile falls through the cracks and that all firesetters are identified, evaluated, and receive appropriate interventions. Ideally, the council should meet once a month to discuss the problems or concerns and develop future plans for the program.

The officials recruited for the council should be individuals with status and influence within their agency (e.g., Fire Chief/Fire Marshal, Police Chief, Juvenile Court Judge, District Attorney, School Principal/School Board Member, and Mental Health and Social Service Agency Directors). The individuals selected should also have a commitment to the problem of juvenile firesetting and the time to devote to finding a solution to the problem.

The coordinator of the juvenile firesetter program will have the primary responsibility for recruiting the council representatives. If the coordinator is a member of the fire service, s/he may also represent the fire service on the council. The coordinator should contact the administrator of each agency to explain the juvenile firesetter program and the role of the council. The coordinator should then set a time to meet with the potential council members. The coordinator may want to have background materials, such

as, statistics on the local juvenile firesetter problem and examples of how each agency is affected. It is important to stress that the problem of juvenile firesetting is a community problem that touches every agency mandated to provide services for juveniles. One program coordinator caught the attention of other agencies -- and ultimately won their support -- by telling them that the next child to die in a fire was their responsibility, not his. Descriptions of how other programs work may also help convince agencies that juvenile firesetter programs work, if they receive the support of other agencies. If the head of the agency is unable to participate on the council, s/he should suggest a representative, preferable the person most likely to have contact with juvenile firesetters.

In addition to representatives from each agency, the juvenile firesetter program may also want to contact local corporate representatives. As noted earlier, these individuals can assist the program with funding issues and publicity and outreach.

Role of the Council. The primary role of the juvenile firesetter program coordinating council is to facilitate multi-agency cooperation to plan, implement, and maintain the juvenile firesetter program. A constitution and by-laws similar to those established by the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Task Force, Inc. in Upper Arlington, Ohio (See Volume II: Resource Materials) can be developed to help guide the council. The creation of the council will help lay the groundwork for the establishment of referral networks.

The coordinating council should institute procedures for referrals to and from the juvenile firesetter program and should define the roles of each agency. For example, the juvenile firesetter program would be chiefly responsible for providing assessment and education, while child protective services and mental health agencies would provide counseling services for more troubled firesetters. Each agency representative could work toward providing the necessary procedures for acquiring services for juveniles referred by the juvenile firesetter program, such as, sliding fees, if necessary.

The council will be responsible for developing specific referral agreements between the juvenile firesetter program and different agencies. These referral mechanisms, which will be describe in detail later in the Referral Mechanisms Component, should include procedures for information exchange between the program and the referral agencies. Dual waivers and contracts enable the program staff to learn the status of the juveniles they refer for additional services. Referral agencies should also be able to learn the status of juveniles referred to the program.

One of the most important functions of the council representatives is to educate the other council members about their agency's strengths and limitations. Misunderstandings and problems between agencies often develop because one agency is not familiar with how the other agency operates. The fire service, for example, is designed for immediate response, but social service organizations are often not able to respond with the same speed. The workshop described below is designed help personnel in different agencies understand how their counterparts work. The council will maintain communication between agencies and troubleshoot when necessary. If a firesetter is not receiving the services recommended by the juvenile firesetter program, the council or appropriate representatives can intervene to find out why.

Finally, council representatives will also be called upon to help identify other agencies or individuals who work with juvenile firesetters. Council representatives should disseminate information about the juvenile firesetter program to their agencies and the community and promote the program. The goal of the council is to gain support for program from all agencies that work with juveniles and to ensure that all those who work with juvenile firesetters understand the function of the juvenile firesetter program.

Juvenile Firesetter Program Workshop

As noted earlier, different agencies have different working cultures. To help agencies learn about each other, the juvenile firesetter program should sponsor a one-day workshop for employees of each of the agencies represented on the council. During the

workshop, which is based on a seminar sponsored by Rochester, New York's FRY program, the members of the coordinating council will serve as a panel to moderate the workshop. Members of the key agencies who work with juvenile firesetters should be invited to attend. The workshop will give participants the opportunity to meet their counterparts in different agencies and learn how different agencies operate.

The juvenile firesetter program may want to have the State Fire Marshal or other representative give opening remarks or a keynote address. After the welcoming remarks, the program coordinator can begin the workshop by describing the characteristics of juvenile firesetters, the nature and extent of the problem in that jurisdiction, and the role of the juvenile firesetter program. The panel representatives can then be asked to describe how their agency works with juvenile firesetter. Attendees can be asked to share their experiences with juvenile firesetters. Participants should be encouraged to ask the panel members how they might handle a particular case.

After a break for lunch, attendees should be assigned to different groups. Each group can include at least one member from each of the different agencies attending the workshop. Each group should be given a description of a juvenile firesetting case and instructed to discuss how they would handle the case. Each group member would then be responsible for describing how his/her agency handles such cases. Participating in this activity gives each attendee the opportunity to see how different agencies handle the same case. Understanding different work styles and philosophies is essential if agencies are going to be asked to work together to solve the juvenile firesetter problem. The workshop can close with a discussion of the role of the juvenile firesetter program coordinating council and what the program needs from each agency.

The workshop should be conducted after the juvenile firesetter program has been established and the staff has been trained. It is designed to give the referral and resource agency staff a formal opportunity to learn about the juvenile firesetter program and meet their counterparts in other agencies.

Resource Directory

The juvenile firesetter program should also create a Juvenile Firesetter Resource Directory. The directory should include the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the agencies and individuals who work with juvenile firesetters. The directory may include local, county, or state agencies. The coordinating council should be able to provide the information needed for the directory. Additional resources may be obtained by writing area fire departments or social service agencies and asking for their help in identifying resources. An example of a juvenile firesetter resource directory can be found in Volume II: Resource Materials.

Jurisdictional characteristics

The structure of any jurisdiction's juvenile firesetter program will be affected by: 1) the size and nature of the juvenile firesetter problem; 2) the resources (e.g., manpower, money, space, etc.); and 3) the availability of private funding, if necessary. As noted earlier, no one program structure is best or even feasible for every jurisdictions. Large fire departments with the necessary people and funds can staff full-time juvenile firesetter programs and provide all of the necessary services using multiple personnel. Smaller departments or those with limited funds may be able to fund one full-time position or may have different fire service personnel assume some of the juvenile firesetter program responsibilities in addition to their other duties.

Like many juvenile firesetter program activities, recruiting representatives to serve on the coordinating council takes time. For some programs, especially smaller programs, it may take more time than the coordinator can supply. At a minimum, the program coordinator should contact each potential referral agency and describe the program. Referral networks need to be established if the juvenile firesetter program is going to meet the needs of the youth it sees. Each referral agency needs to understand that juvenile firesetting is a community problem and they must be willing to be part of the solution.

The juvenile firesetter program staff must also be prepared to handle the turf issues that may exist between agencies. These issues are often deeply-rooted and preclude agencies from working together. One of the major functions of the coordinating council is to maintain communication between agencies. Recruiting representatives from all of the key agencies listed above will help gain support for the program. All of the agencies must be involved in the planning and coordination stage of a juvenile firesetter program. This involvement will give each agency a vested interest in the success of the program and assist in breaking down the barriers that may arise over turf issues.

Summary

The problem of juvenile firesetting is a serious and deadly problem that faces communities throughout the United States. Although the fire service is often the first agency to respond when a fire is set, juvenile firesetting is a community problem that requires the resources of the entire community. Jurisdictions vary, and each will need to determine the seriousness of the juvenile firesetting problem. This components presents guidelines on how to decide what type of program best suits the needs of a particular jurisdiction. The component also provides information on program structure, staffing, training, funding, and planning and coordination with other community agencies.

Each program must assess their needs and resources to decide the optimum means of providing the essential services to juvenile firesetters. The remaining components will describe what those essential services are and different approaches to providing those services.

Component 2

Screening, Evaluating and Developing the Intervention Plan

Screening, Evaluation and Developing the Intervention Plan

Purpose

The primary purpose of this component is to describe the various screening and evaluation options used to assess firesetting youth and their families. There are a number of methods currently used by a variety of community agencies. Different communities may select to involve one or many agencies in these screening and evaluation procedures. The various types of procedures are described in terms of the specific context in which they are applied. For example, the screening and evaluation procedures typically used by the fire service are different than those used by law enforcement. This is because the fire service is more likely to choose methods which will help in preliminary interviews with firesetters; whereas law enforcement is likely to select techniques which will be useful in investigation interviews with suspected arsonists. Screening and evaluation methods will vary according to the roles and functions different community agencies have in working with juvenile firesetters. Therefore, the current assignment of screening and evaluation procedures to particular users reflects their current application by community agencies.

Each of the screening and evaluation methods are described in terms of their functions, the appropriate target populations, who uses them, their content, and their benefits and limitations. There may be instances where procedures utilized by one community agency, such as the fire service, also may be helpful to other users such as mental health or the schools. Decision grids are presented to help users select the most appropriate instruments or methods to best fit their service delivery needs. Although each of the screening and evaluation methods results in different types of information, one of the final products of their application is the development of an effective intervention plan for firesetting youth and their families. The purpose of the intervention plan is to recommend specific steps to be taken to eliminate firesetting behavior and resolve the accompanying psychosocial problems. Careful consideration of various situational factors and critical issues will insure the successful implementation of these screening and evaluation procedures.

Objectives

There are four major objectives to be achieved in the screening and evaluation of firesetting youth and their families. The first is the assessment of firesetting risk. A complete firesetting history must be taken to determine the extent and nature of the problem. In addition, a detailed description of the motives and circumstances surrounding the most recent firestart must be documented to ascertain the severity of the presenting problem. Based upon current information, an estimate must be made of the likelihood that firesetting behavior will recur.

The second objective is the evaluation of the psychosocial and environmental features related to firesetting behavior. Firestarting episodes do not happen as isolated incidents. Although the majority of juvenile firestarts are estimated to be the result of curiosity or accident, about one-third of juvenile fires are started by troubled and conflicted children. Therefore, for a selected proportion of firesetting youth, there must be an assessment of the underlying psychosocial features which accompany their firesetting behavior.

The third objective is the determination of criminal intent. If juveniles are involved in significant fires resulting in property loss, personal injury or death, then they are at risk for being arrested for the crime of arson. Several factors are taken into consideration for determining criminal intent, including whether firesetters have reached the age of accountability, the nature and extent of their firesetting histories, and the motive and intent of their firesetting. Although legal definitions of arson vary from state to state, if an evaluation reveals that there is sufficient evidence indicating malicious and willful firesetting, then the youth can be arrested for arson.

The final objective is the development of an intervention plan. The result of a comprehensive evaluation is the development of an effective intervention plan. Intervention plans must identify the specific steps to be taken to eliminate firesetting behavior and to remediate the accompanying psychosocial problems. In addition, adequate incentives must

be set in place to insure that juvenile firesetters and their families will follow through with the recommended interventions.

The Target Populations

There are three general groups of juvenile firesetters which must be targeted for screening and evaluation. The first group is young children under seven years of age. The fires started by the majority of these children are the result of accidents or curiosity. In general, they do not exhibit significant psychological problems and their family and peer relationships are intact and stable. (There are a small number of children involved in firesetting who exhibit severe psychopathology, and these children are generally referred immediately for psychological evaluation and treatment.) Table 2.1 describes the characteristics of most curiosity firesetters under seven years old.

The second group of firesetters are children ranging in age from eight to twelve. Although the firestarting of some of these children is motivated by curiosity or experimentation, a greater proportion of their firesetting represents underlying psychosocial conflicts. Clinical and empirical research has identified a group of personality and social factors characteristic of this group of firesetters. In addition, there are a set of immediate environmental conditions which are hypothesized to be related to triggering and reinforcing their firesetting behavior. Table 2.2 presents the factors describing recurrent firesetters between the ages of eight and twelve.

The third group of firesetters are adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18. These youth tend to have a long history of undetected fireplay and firestarting behavior. Their current firesetting episodes are either the result of psychosocial conflict and turmoil or intentional criminal behavior. There are some preliminary studies suggesting a set of personality, social, and environmental features descriptive of adolescent firesetters. These features are outlined in Table 2.3.

Table 2.1

Characteristics of Curiosity Firesetters
Ages Seven and Under

Dimension	*Description*
I. Individual Characteristics	Normal physical, cognitive and emotional development. No evidence of psychiatric disturbance.
II. Social Circumstances	A happy, well-adjusted family life. Good peer relationships. No academic or behavior problems in school.
III. Environmental Conditions	Firesetting is the result of accident, experimentation and curiosity. Feelings of guilt and remorse occur after firesetting. Attempts are made to extinguish firestarts. A low probability exists of future firesetting.

Table 2.2

Characteristics of Recurrent Firesetting Children
Ages Eight to Twelve

Dimension	*Description*
I. Individual Characteristics	Evidence of difficulties in one or more areas of physical, cognitive, or emotional functioning. Studies suggest the presence of one or more of the following problems: a greater number of physical illnesses, history of sexual abuse, learning disabilities, overwhelming feelings of anger and aggression, overactivity, impulsiveness, and frequent temper outbursts.
II. Social Circumstances	Single-parent families with absent fathers are typical. When marriages are intact, there is a high degree of discord. Overly harsh methods of discipline coupled with lack of adequate supervision is common in single-parent households. Violent patterns of family interaction also have been observed. A history of academic failure coupled with behavior problems in school are evident. Difficulties establishing and maintaining friendships are observed.
III. Environmental Conditions	Stressful events trigger emotional reactions which result in firesetting. Firesetting represents the emotional release of displaced anger, revenge or aggression. Firesetting has the immediately positive reinforcing properties of attention and effect. No attempts are made to extinguish firestarts. There is rarely consideration of the negative consequences or potential destruction prior to firesetting.

Table 2.3

Characteristics of Adolescent Firesetters

Dimension	*Description*
I. Individual Characteristics	Several significant emotional and behavioral problems are apparent. Studies indicate a higher than average number of accidents resulting in physical injuries, higher levels of sexual arousal, fantasy, excitement, and misbehavior, evidence of gender confusion, lack of emotional depth and restricted capacity for expression, and greater risk-taking behavior.
II. Social Circumstances	Predominant are single-parent households in which discipline and supervision are uneven. Intact families display high levels of marital discord. One or more parents may carry a psychiatric diagnosis. Physical abuse and other violent patterns of family interaction have been observed. Long histories of academic failure and behavior problems in school are typical. Peer pressure and influence are responsible for guiding and directing behavior.
III. Environmental Conditions	Firesetting can be motivated by the need for recognition and attention from peers and from stressful events which trigger emotional reactions resulting in antisocial activity. Firesetting is frequently accompanied by other delinquent activities, such as drug consumption or petty theft, and feelings of excitement and defiance are reported just prior to the act. Feelings of guilt or remorse after firestarting are rare, no attempts are made to extinguish the fires, and there is little fear of punishment.

There are a number of different community agencies that screen and evaluate juvenile firesetters and their families. Based on their broader role in the network of community services, each of these agencies will have different functions regarding their work with firesetters. Consequently, the screening and evaluation methods they select will vary depending on their specific needs. These needs, in part, will depend upon the specific target populations serviced by these agencies. The following community agencies are identified as those most likely to screen and evaluate juvenile firesetters.

The Fire Service. The fire service is frequently viewed as the lead agency in the community for screening and evaluating juvenile firesetters. The primary role of the fire service is the early identification of firesetting youth and their families. There are a number of different ways in which juvenile firesetters are identified by the fire service. First, parents may discover firestarting behavior and voluntarily seek help for their children. Second, other community agencies may look to the fire service as the experts in working with juvenile firesetters and refer their cases to them. Third, fire and arson investigation efforts may reveal the involvement of juveniles in significant fires. Finally, if firesetters are arrested for arson, probation and juvenile justice may refer them to the fire service for an evaluation of the severity of their firesetting problem. Hence, the fire service is likely to see the entire range of juvenile firesetters from young children under seven who firestart out of curiosity to adolescents involved in recurrent firesetting.

Frequently the fire service will have two levels of screening and evaluation procedures. The first level involves preliminary screening to determine the immediate severity of the firesetting problem. This generally is done by telephone interview. If there appears to be no imminent risk, basic information is obtained and appointments are made for additional evaluation sessions. A complete interview with firesetters and their families follows and represents the second level of evaluation. The primary goals of these interviews are to analyze the severity of the firesetting behavior and describe the psychosocial environment. This two level system facilitates the handling of emergency problems and establishes the conditions necessary for a comprehensive evaluation system.

Law Enforcement. In some communities law enforcement is responsible for the investigation of arson fires. In other communities arson fires are investigated either by an Arson Task Force comprised of both law enforcement and fire service personnel or by the arson investigation unit of the fire department. If an arson investigation is underway, certain types of specialized investigative interviews and interrogation procedures may be used to identify juveniles involved in firestarting. Investigative interviews are used to ascertain the nature and extent of the firesetting problem. In some instances investigative interviews lead to the arrest of juveniles for arson. In order to arrest juveniles for arson, sufficient firesetting history and criminal intent must be demonstrated. In addition, in most states juveniles must have reached the age of accountability before they can be arrested for criminal acts. The age of accountability varies from state to state, and can range from as young as seven to as old as 14. If the firesetters have not reached the age of accountability or they are involved in their first firesetting offense, then law-enforcement agencies can select to administer the procedures of counsel and release. Counsel and release refers to talking to juveniles about the dangers of firestarting and the potential for arrest, trial, and incarceration if their firesetting continues. At the conclusion of this talk the youth are released from further obligation or commitment. However, if there is sufficient evidence to arrest the juveniles for the crime of arson, they then enter the juvenile justice system for evaluation and intervention.

Frequently, investigative interviews uncover additional difficulties or problems with juvenile firesetters and their families and the result is their diversion to appropriate social service agencies. For example, most states have mandatory reporting laws that state that children suspected of being victims of neglect, maltreatment, or abuse must be reported with a 24- to 48-hour time period to the appropriate law-enforcement agency. This agency usually is located within the Department of Social Services and in many states is called Child Protective Services. Child Protective Services has the mandate to evaluate all reported cases of suspected child neglect, maltreatment, and abuse and to take the appropriate and necessary actions to remediate the existing problems.

Probation and Juvenile Justice. Juveniles arrested for arson are the primary target population of probation and juvenile justice. Although the procedures of juvenile justice systems vary from state to state, there are some common features which represent the steps that are taken once juveniles have been arrested for arson. Before cases go to court, probation usually conducts a comprehensive evaluation with firesetters and their families. In addition to personal interviews, information is gathered from arresting officers or agencies regarding the circumstances of the cases. Along with collecting family and personal histories, a thorough analysis is made of criminal intent. There are at least two options which can be pursued at the end of these interviews. First, firesetters and their families can be referred for counseling and mental health treatment. In these instances the youth are assigned probationary status with respect to the firesetting offense. These referrals are technically voluntary, but probation frequently informs families that formal action will be taken if they refuse to cooperate. Second, given the presenting information on the juveniles and the nature of their outstanding criminal behavior, probation can determine that a petition will be filed for them to appear in court.

In general, juvenile court judges assume that every effort has been made to keep these juveniles out of court. Juvenile cases proceed like any non-jury trial. There is a fact finding period leading up to the trial. During this period, additional evaluations with juveniles and their families are conducted by probation. From these interviews, probation is likely to make recommendations to the judge for intervention. Hence, both probation and the courts rely heavily on information obtained from personal interviews with children and their families to determine the disposition of their cases.

Mental Health. Mental health evaluation represents the primary alternative for initiating effective treatment for children and adolescents involved in recurrent firesetting. Mental health agencies and professionals evaluate children whose firesetting is indicative of underlying psychological conflict and social maladjustment. In addition, mental health evaluation is appropriate for those juveniles whose firesetting is the result of antisocial and delinquent behavior. Curiosity firesetters are unlikely to require mental health evaluation. Therefore, with the exception of curiosity firestarters, mental health evaluation is an important option for the majority of firesetting youth.

There are a number of ways in which firesetters reach mental health agencies or professionals for evaluation. First, parents may seek help directly for their firesetting children. Second, various community services which identify and screen these youth can refer them for mental health consultation. For example, because the fire service screens the entire range of juvenile firesetters, those children they evaluate as at risk for potential firesetting can be referred immediately for mental health evaluation. Finally, in some instances, mental health consultation can be mandated for firesetters. For example, as a condition of their probation, juvenile justice can specify that juveniles arrested for the crime of arson must receive psychiatric evaluation and intervention. Therefore, there are a number of different pathways which lead firesetting youngsters to mental health evaluation.

Schools. Schools are likely to identify juvenile firesetters in one of two ways. First, parents may disclose to teachers or counselors that their children have become involved in unsupervised firesetting activities. If these children are young, elementary school students, they are likely to be curiosity firesetters. If they have no history of previous firesetting and they have not set a significant fire, then preliminary screening may suggest referral to the fire service for educational intervention. Second, juveniles may select the school environment as their firesetting target. Statistical studies show that over three quarters of school fires are started by children. School fires can range from trash can fires to fires which burn entire buildings. The severity of the fires frequently determines the actions taken by school officials. Older children and adolescents identified as setting school fires are likely either to be referred for mental health intervention or, if they have histories of previous firesetting and they have set a significant fire, they can be arrested for arson. Therefore, school officials are likely to see the entire range of firesetting youth, and they must be prepared to refer them to the appropriate community agencies.

The Procedures

The procedures currently utilized by community agencies to screen and evaluate juvenile firesetters are described in detail later in the component. The procedures described in this component are separated by use (e.g. fire service, law enforcement, probation). The explanation of each procedure includes a description of the procedures:

1) function, 2) target population, 3) users, 4) content, 5) benefits, and 6) limitations. The functions are the intended application of these methods and the anticipated information which results from their use. The target populations define the types of firesetting youth these procedures are intended to screen and evaluate. The users are those professionals most appropriate to implement these procedures. The content describes the construction of the instruments and the specific items which comprise them. The benefits assess the salient features contributing to the successful screening and evaluation of firesetting youth. The limitations define the circumstances which limit the interpretation and application of the information resulting from these procedures. Volume II contain examples of some of the actual screening and evaluation instruments. The Resource List at the end of this component lists the origin of these procedures and who to contact for additional information.

For each user, the fire service, law enforcement, probation and juvenile justice, and mental health, decision grids are presented to help in the selection of the most appropriate screening and evaluation methods. The decision grid summarizes these methods in terms of five critical dimensions: (1) purpose, (2) user, (3) output, (4) impact, and (5) risk. These five dimensions are designed to provide the critical information necessary to help in deciding which method best fits the users needs. For example, a juvenile firesetter program may want to implement an evaluation system designed to identify and separate curiosity firesetters from firesetters with serious psychological problems. Their rationale for wanting such a system is that they think they can provide the necessary educational programs to help curiosity firesetters, while they can refer the more severely disturbed firesetters to mental health professionals and agencies. The decision grid is organized to identify which methods yield evaluation information and are likely to discriminate these target populations in the most effective way with the least amount of risk. The decision grids are designed to guide users toward the most intelligent selection and application of screening and evaluation methods.

Developing the Intervention Plan

Regardless of which agencies implement their selected methods of evaluation, they all share the common goal of producing a plan for the remediation and treatment of

juvenile firesetters. Although specific information and recommendations will vary depending on the particular methods employed, there are some general factors which can serve as guidelines in developing the most effective plan for intervention.

There are five basic factors which should be contained in an intervention plan. The first factor is a comprehensive description of the firesetting problem and the contributing psychosocial features. Although each procedure approaches this description in their own way, there are some fundamental points which must be identified. Firesetting history must recount the emergence of fire interest and fireplay, along with describing all incidents of firesetting. A description of the psychosocial features must include an analysis of personality, family, and social characteristics which may be related to firesetting. A detailed description of this information will contribute to an accurate assessment of the presenting problem.

The second factor of an intervention plan is the assessment. There are four major content areas which must be contained in the assessment. First, there must be an evaluation of firesetting risk, or the likelihood that juveniles will be involved in future firesetting episodes. Second, there must be an assessment of the underlying psychosocial features related to the firesetting. Third, if appropriate, there must be analysis of the motivations and intentions of firesetting to rule out criminal intent. Finally, any special circumstances which are observed must be evaluated, such as evidence of severe neglect, maltreatment or abuse. This assessment should result in the identification of specific areas that need to be adjusted or changed to stop firesetting and remediate the underlying psychosocial features.

The third factor of an intervention plan is specifying recommendations for intervention. While the assessment identified the targets of behavior change, recommendations must be made to effect these changes. Specific interventions must be suggested to stop the firesetting behavior and repair the contributing psychosocial dysfunction. The interventions must be targeted directly at the specific needs of individual children and their families. The interventions represent strategies for changing the behavior patterns of firesetting youth.

The fourth factor is the presentation of the intervention plan to juveniles and their families. This is an extremely important aspect of these procedures in that families must be convinced of the severity of their problems and the urgency of taking action to get the appropriate type of help. In some instances, a written evaluation is prepared and presented to the family. The presentation of the intervention plan must clearly communicate to children and families feasible methods for remediating their presenting problems.

The final factor of the implementation plan is insuring follow-through by firesetters and their families. At the very least, agencies referring juveniles and families for additional intervention can follow through on their own with telephone calls to the referral agency to ascertain whether the recommended contact actually occurred. Different community agencies may have various ways of providing incentives or creating leverages so that follow-through with the intervention plan is more likely to occur. For example, fire departments can offer children a tour of the firehouse or a visit with the fire chief if they pursue their educational intervention. Law enforcement, probation, and juvenile justice can help youth avoid arrest and incarceration by diverting them to mental health counseling. Mental health can suggest to firesetting youth and their families that their quality of life is likely to improve as a result of participation in treatment. Schools can refuse to accept firesetters in their classrooms. There are a number of leverages which can be successfully implemented in certain circumstances to help insure follow-through with the intervention plan.

Situational Influences

Communities will set-up screening and evaluation procedures for juvenile firesetters and their families only if they perceive that the problem is important and critical to their safety and welfare. The nature and extent of the juvenile firesetter problem in communities, in part, will contribute to the social awareness and pressure necessary to create community action on behalf of juvenile firesetters. However, it is the primary responsibility of community agencies to identify whether juvenile firesetting represents a significant part of the firesetting and arson problem in their community. If an active

attempt is made to assess the scope of the problem in the community and the availability of services, and there is confirmation of the problem and need for services, then mounting an effort to establish and maintain screening and evaluation programs can be sanctioned on a community-wide basis.

Critical Issues

The overriding goal of this component is to describe various options for setting up a successful system in communities for screening and evaluating firesetting youth and their families. There are certain circumstances which communities must consider when they set forth to accomplish this goal. Anticipating these conditions and resolving some of these concerns before they create roadblocks can be a critical key to the implementation of an effective screening and evaluation system.

Secure A Mandate. To implement an effective screening and evaluation system for juvenile firesetters in the community there has to be agreement from the participating agencies that this is a necessary, desirable, and feasible goal. Certain agencies may be identified as providing the primary leadership in establishing the system. For example, in many communities fire departments have taken the lead in both implementing screening and evaluation procedures for juvenile firesetters and providing training on the topic to cooperating agencies such as mental health, probation, and juvenile justice and the schools. Cooperating agencies must be identified and agreement must be reached between them regarding a workable system for their community.

Identify Agency Responsibilities. Once an agreement is reached between community agencies regarding the need for a screening and evaluation system for juvenile firesetters, agencies must identify within their own operations the responsible personnel and appropriate program structure. For example, fire departments may determine that public education is the most feasible division to take on the tasks of establishing screening and evaluation procedures for juveniles. Law enforcement may send their juvenile officers to interview firesetters. Schools may send students involved in firestarting to their counselors

for preliminary screening. The details of what personnel in which departments are responsible for screening and evaluating firesetters is an important consideration and must be carefully analyzed prior to the implementation of the system.

Provide Adequate Training. Subsequent to working out a mandate and specifying the logistics of the screening and evaluation system within the community, all personnel responsible for working with juvenile firesetters must receive appropriate training. In many communities, fire departments have played a major role in providing training not only to their personnel, but to other agencies within the community that they have identified as critical in their attempts to help juvenile firesetters. These agencies include, but are not limited to, law enforcement, probation and juvenile justice, burn and trauma units, departments of social services, mental health, and the schools. Training seminars range from one to two hours to one to two days. Their formats and structures vary depending on the specific needs of various communities. Volume II contains examples of training seminar agendas focused on teaching multiple professions how to effectively screen and evaluate juvenile firesetters and their families.

Fire Service Procedures

The following instruments and methods are used as screening and evaluation procedures by the fire service. As noted earlier, the characteristics of each procedure; function, target population, user, content, benefits, and limitations will be summarized. At the end of this section a decision grid is presented to help users select the screening or evaluation procedure most likely to fit their needs.

Telephone Contact Sheet

Functions. When parents or community agencies call the fire department to request help for firesetting youth and their families, this sheet is used as a preliminary screening mechanism. Basic information is gathered such as names, addresses, telephone numbers, a brief summary of the firesetting problem, and a description of the steps to be taken, which frequently includes the dates and times for setting-up personal interviews or the other follow-up procedures which are to be implemented for particular cases.

Target Populations. The target populations include the entire range of juvenile firesetters and families referred to the fire service.

Users. This sheet can be used by any level of fire service personnel who receive initial telephone calls regarding juvenile firesetters. This or other similar sheets recording telephone inquiries or requests for help can be used by a variety of community agencies servicing juvenile firesetters.

Content. The content is basic demographic information and an indication of the next steps to be taken to provide services to juvenile firesetters and their families.

Benefits. The primary benefit of this sheet is that it provides a way to systematically organize in-coming information about juvenile firesetters and their families. In addition, it records preliminary plans for future actions.

Limitations. It may be an unnecessary link in the paperwork chain which potentially impedes rather than assisting the program in providing services to juvenile firesetters.

Juvenile with Fire Worksheets A and B

Functions. Engine companies and fire investigators at the fire scene may identify juveniles involved in firesetting. In these cases they can record preliminary screening information on the Juvenile with Fire Worksheet A. Once the information is recorded at the fire scene, officers and investigators can return to their departments and relay this information to existing juvenile firesetter programs. Juvenile firesetter programs can record in-coming information on the Juvenile with Fire Worksheet B. Together these two worksheets provide preliminary screening information on firesetting youth and their families.

Target Populations. The information recorded on these sheets can apply to the entire range of juvenile firesetters identified by engine companies and fire investigators and referred to juvenile firesetter programs.

Users. These sheets are designed to go hand-in-hand with one another and to facilitate communication regarding the identification of juvenile firesetters between different divisions within the same fire department. Therefore, in those fire departments where engine companies and fire investigators are likely to make first contact with juveniles, these forms will help direct these youth to existing juvenile firesetter programs within the same fire department.

Content. These sheets contain basic demographic information on juvenile firesetters and their families and record the type of services they receive once they enter juvenile firesetter programs.

Benefits. These sheets are likely to increase communication between various divisions within fire departments regarding juvenile firesetters. In addition, these forms are likely to reduce the possibility of juvenile firesetters and their families "falling through the cracks" in the system and failing to receive the necessary services.

Limitations. These sheets will add to the paperwork load of those divisions who use them within fire departments.

USFA's Interview Schedules

Functions. These interview schedules are designed to provide the juvenile firesetter program with systematic methods for evaluating juvenile firesetters and their families. The interview schedules consist of a series of questions which are asked of firesetting youth and their families in personal interviews. The application of these interview schedules yields information regarding the severity of the firesetting problem and preliminary data on the psychosocial environment of juvenile firesetters and their families. The USFA interview schedules have been widely used by a number of fire departments throughout the country and represent standard practice for many fire departments and juvenile firesetter programs. With minimal training, these procedures can be used by fire service personnel to screen, evaluate and refer juvenile firesetters and their families to appropriate service agencies in the community. There are three manuals describing in detail the application of these interview schedules. They are indexed in the Resource List at the end of this component.

Target Populations. These interview schedules and the manuals which describe their application are divided into three age groups. The first manual outlines the interview schedules and methods for working with children seven and under. The second manual describes the interview schedules and methods to be applied to children ages seven to thirteen. The third manual contains the interview schedules and procedures for working with adolescent firesetters. The implementation of the procedures in each of these three manuals allows fire departments to screen and evaluate the entire range of juvenile firesetters.

Users. These interview schedules and accompanying manuals are used by fire departments extensively throughout the United States. Many departments have established juvenile firesetter programs following the guidelines suggested in these manuals. The interview schedules also contain information which may be useful to mental health

professionals regarding the severity of the firesetting problem and the conditions of the psychosocial environment.

Content. Juvenile firesetters and their families are interviewed alone and together for approximately ninety minutes by fire service personnel using the interview schedules. The interview schedules are organized and presented in slightly different ways depending on the age of the firesetter. For children under seven, the interview schedule is divided into two sections. Section one focuses on questions regarding firesetting behavior and section two requires observations to be made regarding the home and the parents. For children seven through thirteen, the interview schedule is divided into three sections. The first section asks questions related to firesetting history, the second section presents questions related to the home and family, and the third section asks questions regarding school and peers. For adolescent firesetters the interview schedule is divided into two main sections. Section one asks questions related to firesetting history and details of the most recent firesetting incident. Section two asks questions regarding the psychological environment, including information about physical health, the home, the family, peers, and school. For all age levels parents are asked to complete a questionnaire which contains observations about the psychological behavior of their children.

The interview schedules have scoring procedures which classify firesetting youth and their families according to risk levels. These risk levels refer to the probability that the juvenile firesetters are likely to participate in future firesetting incidents. There are three levels of risk -- little, definite, and extreme -- representing increasingly severe firesetting behavior. In general, children classified as little risk firestart by accident or out of curiosity, and require educational intervention to remediate their problem. Juveniles classified as definite and extreme risk firestart because of psychological conflict, family difficulties or as part of a pattern of antisocial and delinquent behavior. They require mental health or juvenile justice intervention. Hence, the interview schedules yield a specific method for classifying juvenile firesetters according to the severity of their presenting problem. This classification system also suggests the type of interventions most likely to be beneficial to firesetting youth and their families.

Benefits. The primary advantage of the interview schedules is that they provide systematic procedures for fire service personnel to evaluate the entire range of juvenile firesetters and their families. In addition, these interview schedules yield a quantifiable method for classifying the severity of the firesetting problem and for recommending specific types of interventions. Also, only a brief training period is required to teach fire service personnel how to use these interview schedules. Their application is well documented in three manuals and they are widely accepted and applied throughout the fire service.

Limitations. The major disadvantage of these interview schedules is that their validity and reliability have not been investigated. Therefore, the accuracy and consistency of the information which they yield remains open to question. A primary concern is that children identified as little risk may actually be exhibiting signs of more serious firesetting behavior. One way to address this problem is to monitor little risk firesetters for a period of time subsequent to their evaluation and educational intervention. Also, in cases where definite and extreme firesetting youth have been identified, it is recommended that other assessment strategies be used in conjunction with the interview schedules. For example, as a general rule these types of cases should be referred for additional evaluation by mental health professionals. While these interview schedules provide an important first step in screening and evaluating juvenile firesetters, virtually nothing is known about the quality of the information they yield. Therefore, back-up procedures must be set in place. This will insure that juvenile firesetters and their families receive appropriate assessment and intervention.

Fire-Related Youth (FRY) Program Data Sheet

Functions. The primary function of the FRY Program Data Sheet is the organization of interview information obtained during evaluations of firesetting youth and their families. The data sheet is used to keep a record of the information describing the specific characteristics of firesetting incidents, including firesetting history and details of the most recent firesetting episode. In addition, some information is collected regarding the characteristics of the firesetters, including school data and the physical and psychological

features of firesetters. The specific items on the data sheet do not represent questions which are to be asked of firesetting youth and their family members, but rather they represent the type of information which emerges from interviews. Therefore, the data sheet can be viewed as a record-keeping instrument which also has the potential to yield quantifiable data on the characteristics of firesetting incidents.

Target Populations. The FRY Program Data Sheet can be used for recording data on the entire range of juvenile firesetters screened and evaluated by fire departments.

Users. The FRY Program Data Sheet can be used by juvenile firesetter programs as part of the information they keep in their files on firesetting youth and their families. In addition, because this data sheet contains detailed information on firesetting incidents, arson investigation units within fire departments and law enforcement units investigating arson fires may find the information in this record useful.

Content. The FRY Program Data Sheet is organized according to firesetting incidents. For each incident, information is collected regarding the number of juveniles involved and their relationship to one another. For each juvenile involved in the incident, information is collected on the specific circumstances surrounding the fire, demographic characteristics, school data, behavioral features, and the actions taken by the program to remediate the presenting problems. All information is assigned a numerical value or code which facilitates later analysis of the data. The FRY Program Data Sheet classifies information on firesetting incidents and monitors the youth involved in these episodes.

Benefits. The advantage of the FRY Program Data Sheet is that it assigns numerical codes and values to information regarding firesetting incidents. This structure allows for summarizing data and arriving at quantifiable patterns of firesetting. As a result, trends in firesetting incidents can be identified. Thus, the FRY Program Data Sheet not only has value as a record-keeping method, but it also has potential value as a research instrument.

Limitations. The information on the FRY Program Data Sheet is provided by fire investigators. As such, there is a strong emphasis on firesetting incidents and somewhat less emphasis on understanding why juveniles become involved in firesetting behavior. That is, the clinical interpretation of firesetting behavior is somewhat neglected. Therefore, while the FRY Program Data Sheet provides quantitative information on firesetting incidents, it does not contribute to a qualitative understanding of the psychosocial attributes of firesetting youth and their families.

Decision Grid

Table 2.4 presents the decision grid for fire service procedures. For each method, five dimensions are analyzed which represent important considerations when selecting the most appropriate procedures. Users can identify their need for a specific type of screening or evaluation instrument and weigh the potential output and impact against the anticipated risk. For example, if a fire department wants to implement a method to determine the severity of a youth's firesetting problem, they might select the USFA's interview schedule. The decision grid suggests that this procedure is widely used by several fire departments and will yield a classification of firesetting risk for juveniles. Therefore, the implementation of this procedure is likely to adequately service the current screening and evaluation needs of the fire department. Other fire departments may have different assessment objectives, and the decision grid can assist in evaluating the utility of implementing the various available procedures.

Table 2.4
Fire Service Decision Grid

Method[1]	Purpose	User	Output	Impact	Risk
Telephone Contact Sheet	Screening	Anyone answering the telephone or any fire service personnel	Files with demographic information on firesetters	The organization of first contact information to aid in routing firesetters to the most appropriate help	Adding paperwork to an already overloaded system
Juvenile with Fire Worksheets	Screening	Firefighters, arson investigators, or anyone working in the field	Files with demographics and services received in service delivery points to track firesetters within the system	Increased communication between first contact and service delivery points	Creating an unnecessary trail of paperwork following firesetters.
USFA's Interview Schedules	Evaluation	Trained fire service personnel	Classification of juveniles into low, definite, and extreme risk for firesetting and development of an intervention plan	The application of a widely accepted and applied system for evaluating and classifying firesetters	Currently there are no formal statistical studies of validity or reliability on this method
FRY Program	Recordkeeping	Juvenile firesetter program manager	Files on firesetting incidence, demographics, psychosocial data and intervention steps	Numerical codes and values are assigned to data for quantifiable analysis of trends	Short on supplying information on the "whys" of firesetting

[1]All of these methods target the entire population of juvenile firesetters seen by the fire service.

Law Enforcement, Probation and Juvenile Justice Procedures

The following are some examples of the procedures used by law-enforcement, probation and juvenile justice agencies when encountering juvenile firesetters and arsonists. These are general procedures and they are applied to most all juveniles suspected, investigated, or arrested for any type of criminal activity. At the end of this section the decision grid summarizes the impact of implementing these procedures.

Investigation Interview

Functions. When the cause and origin of fires are either unknown or determined to be arson, law enforcement officials begin their investigation procedures. The investigation usually begins at the fire scene. There are some instances in which juveniles involved in setting fires are identified at the fire scene. The general approach taken by many fire investigators is to convince juveniles to admit to firesetting. If juveniles acknowledge their firesetting, law enforcement has several options. If the fire was set by a very young child, or if it was a first offense motivated by accident or curiosity, then investigators can counsel the youth about the dangers of firesetting, and refer them to juvenile firesetter programs where they are available. If no local juvenile firesetter programs exist, these children are usually released to their parents without further obligation. However, older youth who are involved in fires resulting in significant damage or personal injury and whose firestarting represents a recurrent behavior, can be arrested for the crime of arson. If the firesetter is arrested, juvenile arrest reports are filed. Although these reports are confidential, they are reported as part of the national uniform crime statistics. In addition to arrest reports, there may be other reporting procedures to be completed such as a fire investigation report, a fire scene examination report documenting the physical evidence of arson, and an interview schedule. The interview schedule recounts the communication which occurs between fire investigators and juveniles suspected of arson.

Target Populations. Investigation interviews are conducted with juveniles suspected of arson.

Users. There are at least three different types of law enforcement approaches to fire and arson investigation. In some communities arson investigators are fire department personnel. In other communities police departments handle arson investigations. Finally, there are communities in which Arson Task Forces, comprised of both the fire service and law enforcement, are assigned to investigate arson fires. All law-enforcement agencies designated with the responsibility and authority to investigate and arrest arson suspects follow these procedures.

Content. The content of investigation interviews will vary depending on the stipulated procedures of the various law-enforcement agencies. In addition to collecting basic demographic information, the primary objective of the investigation interview is to establish motive and intent for firesetting.

Miranda Rights

Functions. If arson investigation interviews appear to be leading to the arrest of the firesetters, then law-enforcement officials are mandated by federal law to read the juveniles their Miranda Rights. Miranda Rights pertain to the nature and type of communication which occurs between law enforcement and criminal suspects. These rights outline what can and cannot happen to the information disclosed by suspects during the course of investigation interviews leading to arrests. The Los Angeles Grand Jury has recommended a set of Miranda Rights specifically for juveniles. In addition to California, there are other states which use Juvenile Miranda Rights. These Miranda Rights not only inform juveniles about the nature of their communication with law enforcement, but they include a series of questions to ascertain whether the juveniles understand the meaning of their rights.

Target Populations. In general, juveniles participating in investigation interviews which may lead to their arrest for arson should be read their Miranda Rights.

Users. Law-enforcement agencies responsible for arson investigation and arrest are most likely to administer Miranda Rights.

Child Protective Services Report

Functions. In most states, the law mandates reporting suspected child neglect, maltreatment, or abuse within a 24- to 48-hour time period to the agency designated as enforcing this type of legal protection. This agency frequently is organized within the Department of Social Services and typically is referred to as Child Protective Services. In most states, Child Protective Services investigates all reported incidents of suspected child neglect, maltreatment or abuse. Their primary function is to ascertain if credible evidence can be demonstrated to substantiate suspicions of neglect and abuse. Usually within a short period of time, (24 hours in most states), a preliminary assessment is completed to determine if the health and safety of children are in immediate jeopardy. If this determination is made, then it is likely that these youngsters will be removed from their current living situation. If there is no outstanding emergency, then within a specified period of time Child Protective Services will conduct a comprehensive evaluation to determine whether the reports are indicated or unfounded. Based upon the information collected in these evaluations, Child Protective Services refers these youngsters and their families for appropriate intervention.

Target Populations. Children suspected of being victims of neglect, maltreatment or abuse and their families can be reported to Child Protective Services.

Users. All persons, officials and institutions suspecting child abuse are mandated by most state laws to report their suspicions within a 24- to 48-hour time period to Child Protective Services.

Content. The reporting procedures require basic demographic information on children and family members. The type of suspected neglect, maltreatment or abuse must be specified, along with the reasons for the suspicions or observations.

Adolescent Firesetter Decision Criteria

Functions. In most states, when youth are arrested for arson they are referred to probation. Probation departments usually conduct an assessment of the youth and their families. The primary goal of this assessment is to determine whether to prosecute. The Adolescent Firesetter Decision Criteria are guidelines to be used in assisting in the evaluation of the psychological and social environment of firesetters and their families. It classifies juveniles and families into risk levels which help determine the likelihood that these youth will be involved in future arson-related or other antisocial activities.

Target Populations. The Adolescent Firesetter Decision Criteria focuses primarily on analyzing components of delinquent behavior. Therefore, it is most appropriately applied to juveniles who have been arrested for firesetting or where there is some question as to whether their firesetting activity is the result of psychosocial conflict or defiant antisocial behavior.

Users. The Adolescent Firesetter Decision Criteria is designed to be used by intake counselors in probation departments. It is designed to be used in conjunction with other assessment tools. Its application requires a certain level of understanding regarding the interpretation of individual items, therefore it should not be used without prior training.

Content. The Adolescent Firesetter Decision Criteria is modeled after The Juvenile Sexual Offender Decision Criteria. The decision criteria contained in the instrument are intended to be used as guidelines in determining the severity of the presenting firesetting behavior. The instrument is divided into three risk levels - high, moderate, and low. Each risk level contains two subscales which assess risk characteristics separately for juveniles and their families. The scales contain statements which describe a range of attitudes and behaviors reflecting participation in firesetting as well as other types of antisocial activities. These statements represent the actual decision criteria for each of the three risk levels.

Counselors are asked to rate the juveniles and families on the individual statements by assigning a numerical rating of 3 if the item is of high concern, a 2 if it is of moderate concern, and a 1 if it is of low concern. These statements are not intended to be asked as questions during intake evaluations with juveniles and their families. Rather, as result of intake assessments, counselors should be able to rate the juveniles and their families using these decision criteria.

The Adolescent Decision Criteria does not result in a total score determining a specific risk level for juveniles and their families. Rather, by calculating the frequency with which the counselors use the ratings, 3 (high concern), 2 (moderate concern), or 1 (low concern), the tendency toward high, moderate or low risk for firesetting can be estimated. Consequently, counselors will have a general idea which risk levels adolescents and families are likely to represent in assessing the severity of the presenting firesetting behavior and their amenability to treatment.

Benefits. The major asset of the Adolescent Decision Criteria is that it organizes statements regarding the severity of delinquent firesetting behavior. Currently there are no other attempts to describe these distinctions. In addition, it offers general guidelines in helping probation counselors make difficult decisions regarding actions to be taken for firesetting youth and their families.

Limitations. The Adolescent Decision Criteria represents a preliminary attempt at developing standards to help increase the accuracy of decisions reached regarding the severity of delinquent firesetting behavior. Although this approach shows great promise, there are a number of tasks which remain to be accomplished. First, instructions standardizing its application would increase the quality of the evaluative information. Second, if the instrument resulted in a total quantitative score, then a more reliable decision-making criteria may be approached. Because there have been no reliability or validity studies conducted on the instrument, it is difficult to determine its success in assessing the severity of firesetting and arson-related behaviors and deciding on the most effective course of intervention.

Probation Case Plan

Functions. Once juvenile firesetters are referred to probation for evaluation, counselors follow specific procedures for conducting assessments and making recommendations for intervention. There are a number of different approaches that are used for conducting these assessments. They vary from county to county and from state to state. In general, basic information is collected from juveniles regarding their firesetting or other delinquent offenses and their psychological and social background. Family members also are interviewed regarding these same topics. From these evaluations, specific intervention objectives are identified to remediate the current behavior problems. In addition, specific steps are outlined to insure that these objectives are accomplished within a reasonable period of time.

Target Populations. Juveniles are not evaluated by probation unless they have been arrested for arson or other crimes.

Users. Probation intake counselors typically conduct assessments of juveniles arrested for arson.

Content. Although the specific format and content of this evaluation is likely to vary between probation departments, there is some basic information that is routinely collected in the majority of these assessments. This basic information includes detailed descriptions of the history of antisocial activities with an emphasis on the current firesetting offense, involvement with alcohol and drugs, relationships with family and friends, current skills and strengths, and future goals. Upon completing interviews with juveniles and their family members, intake officers develop case plans which outline treatment objectives, specify the steps which are to be taken to meet these objectives, and outline who is responsible for achieving these objectives within a specific period of time. This constitutes the basic format of the evaluation procedures.

Decision Grid

Table 2.5 presents the decision grid summarizing the procedures utilized by law enforcement, probation and juvenile justice to screen juvenile firesetters and arsonists. These are general procedures which can vary from state to state, depending on specific statutes and legal guidelines. It is anticipated that most law enforcement, probation, and juvenile justice agencies will have similar procedures already in place, but they may want to refer to this decision grid to verify the output and impact of their particular methods. The Adolescent Decision Criteria represents a new evaluation method designed specifically for juvenile firesetter and arsonist populations.

Table 2.5
Law Enforcement, Probation, and Juvenile Justice
Decision Grid

Method	Target/Population	Purpose	User	Output	Impact	Risk
Law Enforcement						
Investigation Interview	Youth suspected of arson	Documentation of fire incidence	Juvenile investigators	In cases of no arrest, incidence reports are filed; in cases of arrest arrest records are established	Systematic documentation and monitoring of incidence rates of juvenile firesetting and arson	Arrested juveniles may not be diverted for for necessary psychological interventions
Child Protective Services Report	Youngsters who evidence abuse, neglect, or maltreatment	Documentation of credible evidence demonstrating neglect, abuse, or maltreatment	Any persons, officials, or institutions suspecting child abuse	Filed reports to the legal entity in state governments responsible for investigating cases of child abuse	The protection of the physical and psychological welfare of children as guaranteed by law	
Miranda Rights	Youth arrested for arson	To inform youth of their legal rights prior to arrest	Law enforcement personnel responsible for arson investigation and arrest	A signed legal document acknowledging administration of rights	The protection of the legal rights of arrested minors	
Probation and Juvenile Justice						
Adolescent Firesetter Decision Criteria	Adolescents arrested, but not yet tried or sentenced for arson	The evaluation of the psychosocial factors related to firesetting and arson behavior	Intake counselors in probation departments	An assessment of the severity of the firesetting and arson behavior according to one of three risk levels - low, moderate, and high	Systematic documentation of the severity of delinquent firesetting behavior	No quantifiable summary score results, and no formal statistical studies have been conducted
Probation Case Plan	Juveniles arrested, but not yet tried or sentenced for arson	To assess the psychosocial factors related to firesetting and identify interventions	Probation department counselors	Documentation of case plans to remediate delinquent firesetting behavior	The identification of specific intervention objectives	Relies heavily on self-report from youth and their families

Mental Health and School Procedures

The following approaches represent some examples of mental health procedures used to evaluate juvenile firesetters. At the end of this section, the decision grid is presented which evaluates the impact of these procedures. In addition the section will discuss briefly the role of schools in working with juveniles to prevent firesetting behavior.

The Therapeutic Assessment of Firesetting (TAF) Questionnaire

Functions. The TAF is a structured interview/questionnaire designed to assess older children and adolescents who have been involved in firesetting. The TAF is constructed to accomplish several functions, including evaluating the nature and extent of the firesetting problem, assessing the underlying dynamics of firesetting behavior, planning for the rehabilitation of firesetters, and stimulating therapeutic growth and introspection. The 133 items comprising the TAF were drawn from the literature on firesetting and from clinical experience with psychiatrically-committed arsonists. The TAF items are organized into general factors examining the situational and personality precipitants of the fire setting incident. In addition, it provides a method to explore the most recent fire start and its circumstances in a detailed and explicit way. The TAF is designed to allow firesetters to talk explicitly about their firesetting problem and give them the opportunity to gain a greater understanding about the underlying motivations for their behavior.

Target Populations. The TAF is designed to be used when conducting structured interviews with firesetters who are being assessed for the first time or who are receiving treatment for firesetting or arson.

Users. The TAF is intended to be implemented by mental health professionals or experienced clinicians. It is recommended that those administering the TAF have some familiarity with rapport-building, interview techniques, and awareness of gross psychopathology. Although designed for mental health professionals, the TAF also has been used by evaluators for parole, law-enforcement, fire prevention, and county fire

department personnel. The interview can be completed in as little as one hour (for the purposes of assessment), or it can take up to five one-hour sessions (for the purposes of treatment and therapy) depending on the availability of time and how much the firesetters are encouraged to elaborate on their answers. The TAF is accompanied by a well-documented set of instructions describing its applications.

Content. It is intended that the TAF's primary focus be its usefulness in stimulating understanding and insight into the dynamics of firesetting behavior within the context of a clinical interview. The items comprising the TAF also can be organized into specific dimensions or factors relating to the explanation of firesetting behavior. These factors include: (1) reliability, which is a scale assessing the consistency or accuracy of responses to the TAF, (2) family background and experiences, (3) intelligence, (4) mental disturbance and disorder, (5) physical health, (6) financial problems, (7) lack of supportive relationships, (8) difficulty in expressing anger and frustration, and (9) pyromania or pyromaniac tendencies. Although there is no formal scoring procedure for assessing these factors, interpretation can be enhanced by noting that the greater the number of endorsed items under a particular factor, the more focus should be placed on that factor for treatment and rehabilitation. However, the fact that firesetters do not score highly on a particular factor does not conclusively prove that such a factor is absent. Rather, it says that firesetters do not admit to the specific items comprising the factor. Hence, the self-report nature of the TAF must be taken into consideration when interpreting responses.

Benefits. The major benefit of the TAF is that it represents a unique attempt at providing a structure for interviewing, evaluating, and stimulating the treatment of individuals with significant firesetting histories. It has the potential to provide valuable information on the underlying causes of recurrent firesetting behavior and arson-related activities. In addition, it has the dual advantage of providing clinicians with important psychosocial information and potentially stimulating self-insight and introspection on the part of firesetters.

Limitations. Although the TAF yields excellent qualitative data on the psychosocial functioning of firesetters, an attempt to obtain norms, profiles or summary scores of the items would enhance its creditability, broaden its application, and improve its interpretation and generalizability. Information on the reliability and validity of the TAF would increase its utility as a clinical and research instrument.

The Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist

Functions. The Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist provides an empirical definition of child behavior problems. In addition, it assesses the social competency of children. It is a paper and pencil test which can be used in conjunction with clinical evaluations to provide a quantitative picture of the problems and the competencies of juveniles.

Target Populations. The Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist assesses children as young as four and as old as 16. There are standardized norms against which to compare individual responses. It can be used with normal and emotionally impaired youth.

Users. The Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist should be administered and interpreted by trained clinicians who are familiar with the application and interpretation of the scale.

Content. The Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist consists of two major scales. The first is a 20-item social competency scale which contains three sub-scales, an activities score, a socialization score and a school score. The second is a behavior problem scale which contains two sub-scales, an internalizing behavior score and an externalizing behavior score. The social competency scale asks questions regarding participation in sports, hobbies, games, activities, organizations, jobs, chores, the nature of friendships and how juveniles get along with others, how well they work and play alone, and their level of school functioning. There are four different respondent forms for the Checklist, including a parent form, a teacher form, a direct observation form and a youth self-report form. The parent

form is most frequently used in clinical settings. A substantial number of reliability and validity studies demonstrate that the responses to the Checklist are accurate and consistent.

Benefits. There are several advantages of the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist. First, there are well-documented studies on the reliability and validity of the Checklist. Second, the scales assess both problems and competencies, giving a comprehensive perspective on the behavioral functioning of children. Third, the scales can be scored without the use of a computer. Finally, there is a well-written manual describing the administration and scoring of the Checklist.

Limitations. The Checklist must be used in conjunction with a comprehensive clinical evaluation when assessing firesetting youth and their families. While it provides an accurate and reliable empirical view of behavior, it does not replace the value of exploration, observation, and evaluation which takes place during clinical interviews.

General Methods of Psychosocial Assessment

Mental health professionals often develop their own styles and methods for conducting assessment interviews. Frequently evaluations will reflect the theoretical orientation, training, and treatment approaches of the practitioners. However, regardless of these factors, it is expected that juveniles whose presenting problem is firesetting will receive a thorough evaluation of their firesetting history, along with an analysis of the underlying psychosocial dynamics contributing to the presenting problems. The Resource List at the end of this component indicates additional references which will be helpful to clinicians who want to understand how to conduct comprehensive assessments of firesetting history and related psychopathology.

Decision Grid

Table 2.6 presents the decision grid for mental health procedures. The TAF represents the only method designed to be used specifically with juvenile firesetters. The remaining two methods represent general assessment procedures which also have been utilized to assess juvenile firesetters. The decision grid summarizes the output, impact, and risk associated with the application of each of these methods.

School Procedures

The primary role of schools in working with juveniles is to prevent the occurrence of fireplay and firesetting behavior through educational programs. These activities are outlined extensively in the Intervention Services component. When school personnel identify youth who firestart, their major course of action should be to refer them to one of several agencies including the juvenile firesetter program, a mental health professional or agency, and law enforcement. The referral will depend, in part, on the severity of the presenting problem and the significance of the fire. While it is unreasonable to assume that school personnel can provide evaluation services to juvenile firesetters, schools should be able to recognize the problem, identify the juveniles, and through preliminary screening procedures, refer them to the appropriate service agency.

Table 2.6
Mental Health Decision Grid

Method	Target/Population	Purpose	User	Output	Impact	Risk
The Therapeutic Assessment of Firesetting Scale (TAF)	Older children and adolescents with significant histories of firesetting	Evaluation of psychosocial factors related to firesetting, planning for rehabilitation, and stimulating therapeutic growth	Trained mental health professionals or paraprofessionals	Through a structured interview format, a set of answers to systematic questions related to firesetting	Provides a method for for obtaining important clinical information on firesetting	Does not yield a summary score nor can its psychometric properties be evaluated
The Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist	Youngsters exhibiting behavior problems	A paper and pencil test which provides quantitative information on behavior problems as well as competencies	Trained mental health professionals	Standard scores on two scales; social competency and behavior problems	Psychometrically sound clinical information on youngsters with behavior problems	Recommended to be used only in conjunction with a comprehensive clinical evaluation
General Psychosocial Assessment	All youngsters exhibiting psychological problems	To assess the psychological problems and strengths of youngsters and their families	Mental health professionals	Output will vary according to specific methods and procedures employed	Evaluation of psychological problems and development of plans for their resolution	

Resource List

The following items provide ways to get further information about the procedures and methods described in the component.

Fire Service Procedures

1. Telephone Contact Sheet

   Source: The Firehawk Children's Program

   Reference: Gaynor, J., et al. (1984). The Firehawk Children's Program. A Working Manual. San Francisco: The National Firehawk Foundation.

2. Juvenile With Fire Worksheets A and B

   Source: Portland Fire Bureau

   Contact: Lt. Steven Muir
   Portland Fire Bureau
   55 SW Ash
   Portland, Oregon
   (503) 248-0203

3. USFA's Interview Schedules

   Source: U.S. Fire Administration

   References: Fineman, K., et al. (1980). Child Firesetter Handbook. Ages 7 and Under. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

   Fineman, K., et al. (1984). Preadolescent Firesetter Handbook. Ages 7 to 13. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

   Gaynor, J., et al. (1988). Adolescent Firesetter Handbook. Ages 14-18. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office

   Contact: US Fire Administration
   FEMA
   National Fire Academy
   16825 South Seton Avenue, Building N, Suite 311
   Emmitsburg, MD 21727
   (301) 447-6771

4. FRY Program Data Sheet

Source: Rochester, New York's FRY Program

References: Cole, R.E., et al. (1984). Juvenile Firesetter Intervention. Report of the Rochester, New York FRY Program Development Project. New York: Department of State Office of Fire Prevention and Control.

Cole, R.E., et al. (1986). Children and Fire, Second Report of the Rochester, New York Fire Department FRY Program Development Project. New York: Department of State Office of Fire Prevention and Control.

Law-Enforcement Procedures

1. Investigation Interview

Source: Arson Task Force
1215 South Boulevard
Charlotte, N.C. 28203

2. Juvenile Miranda Rights

Source: Los Angeles Grand Jury

Source: Arson Task Force
1215 South Boulevard
Charlotte, N.C. 28203

Probation and Juvenile Justice Procedures

1. Adolescent Firesetter Decision Criteria

Source: Lane County Juvenile Department
Eugene, Oregon

Contact: Alison Stickrod
Lane County Juvenile Probation
2411 Centennial Boulevard
Eugene, Oregon 97401

2. Probation Case Plan

Source: Probation Department
Charlotte, North Carolina

Mental Health Procedures

1. The Therapeutic Assessment of Firesetting (TAF) Questionnaire

Source: Terry Neary, Ph.D.
Forest Hospital
Des Plaines, Illinois
(312) 635-4100 ext. 230

2. The Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist

Reference: Achenbach, T.M. & Edelbrock, C.S. (1982). Manual for the Child Behavior Checklist and Child Behavior Profile. Burlington, VT: Child Psychiatry, University of Vermont

3. General Methods of Psychosocial Assessment

References: Gaynor, J. & Hatcher, C. (1987). The Psychology of CHild Firesetting, Detection, and Intervention. New York: Brunner/Mazel, Publishers.

Wooden, W.S. & Berky, M.L. (1984). Children and Arson, America's Middle-class Nightmare. New York: Plenum Press.

Component 3

Intervention Services

Purpose

The Intervention Services component presents the primary intervention strategies designed to reduce the incidence of juvenile involvement in firesetting behavior and arson-related activities. These strategies reflect three major intervention approaches. The first strategy is primary prevention. The goal of primary prevention is to provide substantial fire safety and educational experience to juveniles so that they develop fire-competent behaviors and avoid participation in unsupervised firestarts. The second strategy is early intervention. Youth participating in fireplay and firesetting behavior motivated by accident, curiosity or experimentation can be identified and educated to reduce the likelihood of their future involvement in unsupervised firestarts. The third strategy is core intervention. Recurrent firesetters frequently experience significant psychological and social conflict and turmoil related to their firestarting activities. It is hypothesized that if these psychosocial problems can be adjusted or remediated, then not only are the chances of involvement in future firesetting episodes greatly reduced, but the quality of life is likely to improve for these juveniles and their families.

The three intervention strategies - primary prevention, early intervention, and core intervention - are aimed at reducing juvenile involvement in the entire range of unsupervised fireplay and firesetting activities. Each of the strategies have specific intervention objectives and they are aimed at particular target populations. Primary prevention efforts involve several community agencies including the schools, the fire service, and law enforcement. The fire service is the lead community agency providing early intervention services. They use many different types of program models to work with juvenile firesetters. Core intervention services involve mental agencies and professionals and the probation and juvenile justice systems. For each level of intervention, decision grids are presented to help program managers select the best intervention options to meet the objectives and target population needs of their service delivery system.

Intervention Objectives and Decision Grids

Each of the three intervention strategies are designed to achieve specific objectives. Primary prevention efforts are intended to reduce the incidence of first-time unsupervised fireplay and firesetting in populations of otherwise normal youth. This is accomplished by providing children of all ages with educational experiences focused on the rules of fire safety and prevention and understanding the consequences of fireplay and firesetting.

Early intervention programs are focused on identifying both children at-risk for fireplay or firesetting activities and those involved in first-time fireplay and firesetting episodes. In addition, their objective is to prevent the recurrence of fireplay and firesetting incidents. The implementation of short-term evaluation, education, and referral mechanisms within the fire service and other supporting community agencies are designed to meet these objectives.

Core intervention services are aimed at eliminating recurrent firesetting behavior and providing treatment and remediation for the contributing psychosocial determinants. Mental health intervention is the primary method utilized to stop recurrent firesetting and treat the underlying causes of the behavior. Probation and juvenile justice efforts provide legal incentives to youth and their families to pursue treatment for their patterns of antisocial and delinquent behavior. If treatment recommendations are not followed, the juvenile justice system can implement legal consequences and punishments related to firesetting and arson offenses.

Decision grids are presented for each level of intervention. These decision grids are designed to help program managers make informed choices regarding the selection and implementation of intervention approaches which best meet their needs. There are five critical dimensions identified as important criteria in choosing intervention strategies. They are: (1) purpose, (2) source, (3) acceptability, (4) impact, and (5) limitations. Careful consideration of these dimensions will lead to an intelligent decision regarding the implementation of an appropriate and effective intervention strategy. For example, if a

well-funded fire department in a major metropolitan area wants to initiate a comprehensive juvenile firesetter program, which includes both evaluation and family counseling services, they can utilize the decision grid to ascertain whether this approach has been tried, and, given specific limitations, whether it has been successfully implemented. The decision grids serve as guides to help users decide how to build an effective juvenile firesetter program in their community.

Target Populations

Each of the three major intervention strategies are designed to work with specific target populations of firesetting youth. Primary prevention efforts are focused on children and adolescents with little or no history of fireplay or firesetting. Although the majority of these programs are developed for elementary school children, it is expected that older youth and adolescents also can benefit from age-appropriate fire safety and prevention programs. Early intervention programs are designed for children whose firesetting is the result of accident, curiosity or experimentation. These programs work with children ranging from under seven to as old as twelve. Core intervention services are aimed at those children and adolescents whose recurrent firesetting behavior is the result of significant psychopathology, antisocial activity or criminal behavior. These youth are usually older and range in age from eight to eighteen. The Screening, Evaluation and Developing the Intervention Plan Component details the psychosocial characteristics of the entire range of firesetting youth.

Situational Influences

There are several situational factors which must be taken into account when designing intervention programs for juvenile firesetters. First, the incidence of the local juvenile firesetting problem must be assessed prior to the development of plans to initiate a program. This information is not always readily available and often requires the organization of a separate project to evaluate the extent of the juvenile firesetting problem in the community. An assessment of need is an appropriate starting point for determining

whether communities can benefit from the development of juvenile firesetter intervention programs.

The design and implementation of juvenile firesetter programs will depend upon the commitment of time and resources participating agencies are willing to make in their community. For example, schools must decide whether primary prevention programs designed to teach fire safety are a high priority for their curriculum. Fire departments, heavily committed to suppression activities, will need to direct their focus to the prevention aspect of fighting fires. Law enforcement, probation and juvenile justice must select to pay particular attention to the firesetting population of juveniles, as opposed to other groups of delinquent youth. Frequently additional program efforts aimed at specific problems areas or target populations can be incorporated into existing operations, thereby keeping costs at a minimum. Nevertheless, the level of time and resources committed to juvenile firesetter intervention programs is directly related to their content, utility, and effectiveness.

Juvenile firesetting must be viewed as a community problem, and as such, it deserves community-wide attention. Although fire departments may take the lead role in developing programs for juvenile firesetters, their efforts alone will not resolve the problem. It is crucial that there be working linkage established between the various community agencies capable of helping juvenile firesetters and their families. Schools, the fire service, law enforcement, juvenile justice and mental health must all establish open communication channels with one another so that an organized effort is mounted to reduce juvenile involvement in firesetting and arson-related activities.

Critical Issues

The success of juvenile firesetter intervention programs depends on several factors. First, the community must be educated about the problems of juvenile firesetting. An effective public relations campaign must be developed to teach parents and adults how to recognize the problem in children and where and how to go for help to resolve it. Regardless of the level of intervention, from primary prevention to core intervention, the

public must understand the seriousness of juvenile involvement in firesetting and they must be knowledgeable enough to take the first steps to get the appropriate help.

Each community agency focusing their attention on the problem of juvenile firesetting is likely to have slightly different roles and responsibilities, depending on the nature and extent of their services. Those agencies and professionals involved in helping juvenile firesetters must be trained in how to work with this special population of youth. Although training needs will vary according to the type of services offered, designing and implementing intervention programs often requires special expertise and information. Education manuals coupled with training seminars are important resources for establishing and maintaining effective intervention services.

Although the preliminary stages of designing and developing new programs often involves a great deal of struggle and perseverance, the true sign of a successful endeavor is whether these new program efforts can survive their infancy and mature into a fully functioning and on-going part of their organizational structure. Juvenile firesetter intervention programs must be viewed as an essential part of not only reducing juvenile involvement in firesetting, but integral to maintaining low rates over time. This argument is a key factor in helping to sustain the resources necessary for maintaining program operations over the long-term. The community and the participating service agencies must be convinced of the value of juvenile firesetter intervention programs. Efforts to ensure that the time and resources committed to these programs become part of on-going budget and staffing considerations within the management of organizations will help to sustain the life of these programs. Although community needs and priorities are likely to shift over time, a fire safe and secure community is a powerful argument for maintaining an adequate and effective intervention system for sustaining low rates of juvenile involvement in firesetting and arson.

Primary Prevention

Primary prevention programs are aimed at reducing juvenile involvement in first-time unsupervised fireplay and firesetting incidents. The basic premise of these programs is that if children understand the rules of fire safety and prevention and the consequences of firestarting, they are less likely to initiate or participate in nonproductive firesetting. Primary prevention efforts are educational programs designed to teach children of all ages fire safety and survival skills.

There are several different educational models utilized in primary prevention programs. The models employed largely depend on the sites which operate the programs. Primary prevention programs are found in the schools, the fire service, and law enforcement. Schools can offer a wide range of prevention activities including fire safety education curriculum and activities, slide presentations, films, and assemblies. The fire service can mount national and local media campaigns, utilize district fire houses to provide tours and educational seminars for youth, and work with their school districts to present unique educational experiences. Law enforcement can incorporate fire safety education as part of their general anti-crime efforts aimed at youth. Primary prevention programs can utilize a variety of different learning strategies and activities to accomplish the common objective of teaching youth how to develop fire-safe and competent behaviors.

It is recommended that community organizations or agencies launch a comprehensive fire prevention effort designed to reach a broad age-range of children. Educational programs for preschool children should be explored as well as programs aimed at elementary, middle and high school aged youth. Schools are the obvious site where maximal efforts can be focused to reach the majority of children. The amount of time set aside for teaching fire prevention and safety will depend on the level of effort schools are willing to commit. A minimal effort might consist of a fire education presentation to youth coupled with the distribution of printed material to parents. A more comprehensive approach might be the adoption of a fire safety curriculum. There are several excellent packages of fire safety and prevention programs already developed for schools. The

particular program or set of programs developed depends on the available resources and the range and depth of desired services. It is strongly recommended that schools integrate primary prevention efforts into their on-going curriculum plans.

Fire service efforts can be important adjuncts in helping to promote the development of fire safety behaviors in children and their families. For example, parents who first notice their children's interest in fire or who have found their children playing with matches may instinctively call their local fire department for help. Fire departments can offer to talk with these youth, have them tour the local fire house and provide short-term educational services designed to teach fire prevention to children and their families. In addition, the fire service can work with their local schools to enrich fire prevention programs by offering classroom visits or assemblies, slide presentations and films designed to communicate information on fire safety and prevention. Finally, local fire departments can support national programs, such as National Fire Prevention Week, by mounting active print and television media campaigns designed to promote fire safety.

There are five basic elements which must be considered in the development of a successful primary prevention program for fire safety. First, the educational objectives of the fire safety program must be specified. Second, the community agencies willing to participate in primary prevention must be identified. Third, the specific populations of juveniles must be targeted. Fourth, the degree of commitment to teaching fire prevention (in terms of time, personnel, etc.), must be determined. Finally, the format and structure of the prevention effort must be established. Careful consideration must be given to the nature and type of fire safety programs which are selected for implementation. They must fit into a coordinated and comprehensive plan for promoting community fire safety and prevention.

The following programs represent a select sample of successful primary prevention efforts currently operating in several communities. They are described in terms of their functions, target populations, users, content, benefits, and limitations. The Resource List at the end of this component provides details on how to obtain further information about all of the programs.

School Curriculum and Programs

The following are descriptions of primary prevention school curriculum and programs. Most of these programs are comprehensive packages which consist of specific classroom learning activities designed to teach fire safety and prevention rules to elementary and secondary school students. At the end of this section a decision grid is presented to analyze the impact and risk associated with implementing these programs.

A. Children's Television Workshop (CTW's) Fire Safety Project

Functions. The CTW's Fire Safety Project, produced by its Community Services Division, is a unique nationally focused program teaching preschool children fire prevention. This project reaches children at the critical age of their initial fire awareness and teaches them appropriate attitudes toward fire and basic fire safety rules. The methods of communication utilized by this project deserve special attention. Sesame Street characters (already popular with preschoolers) are the primary communicators of fire safety lessons. Characters like "Bert" and "Ernie," two very different fellows but very best friends, are utilized to teach children about fire drills, firefighters, and firefighter training. Because these Sesame Street characters already have entered the lives of preschoolers through a variety of different types of exposures, they become effective communicators of important messages to children.

Target Populations. The primary audience of CTW's Fire Safety Project is preschoolers, although children ages five to seven also find these fire safety lessons valuable.

Users. Children, parents, and teachers can understand and apply the messages and materials created by this project.

Content. The CTW's Fire Safety Project employs multiple mediums of communicating fire safety information. The primary method is through short, single-topic vignettes presented as a regular part of the television programming of Sesame Street. Initial research indicated that although some fire safety lessons were appropriate for television viewing, the majority of the material needed to be demonstrated directly to children. Hence, CTW

designed materials and seminars to teach children in their preschool setting. In addition, CTW produces a Fire Safety Newsletter available to nursery and preschools. The application of three diverse mediums of communication - television, teaching materials and the Newsletter - along with the use of Sesame Street characters as communicators, offers an intensive and consistent approach to teaching fire safety to children at the critical preschool age.

Benefits. This is a unique and comprehensive attempt at introducing preschool age children to the concept of fire safety.

Limitations. Although previous research suggests that preschoolers can benefit from fire safety education, there is little documentation evaluating the effectiveness of this particular approach.

B. Learn Not to Burn

Functions. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) developed the Learn Not to Burn Fire Safety Curriculum to meet the demand to educate primary school children about the rules and behaviors of fire prevention. Learn Not to Burn consists of a comprehensive package of materials for teachers which is designed to help them implement a fire safety curriculum in their classroom. The curriculum is organized around a set of 25 key fire safety behaviors which are divided into three categories: protection, prevention, and persuasion. The NFPA recommends that children demonstrate competency in all 25 behaviors by the completion of their primary school education.

Target Populations. Learn Not to Burn is designed to be used in the elementary school classrooms of kindergarten through eighth grade.

Users. Learn Not to Burn is intended to be implemented in the classroom by primary school teachers.

Content. Learn Not to Burn's 25 fire safety behaviors are categorized according to protection, prevention and persuasion and prioritized in terms of their importance. The first priority, protection, involves those behaviors children must learn in case of fire. Some examples of protection behaviors include participating in school fire drills, performing the stop, drop, and roll procedure, and developing a home fire escape plan. The second priority, prevention, is comprised of those behaviors which will deter injury before fire occurs. Some examples of prevention behaviors include how to use matches safely, how to store flammable liquids, and how to identify and remove electrical hazards. The third priority, persuasion, focuses on those behaviors which encourage others to become aware of fire safety and prevention activities. Some examples of persuasion behaviors involve teaching others about smoke detectors, making sure others properly maintain their electrical equipment and helping others install electrical outlet covers. Learning all 25 key behaviors results in children developing competent and responsible fire safety skills.

The Learn Not to Burn program contains an extensive package of materials including documentation of the general design of the curriculum, 25 curriculum cards showing teachers how to help their students attain competence in each of the key fire safety behaviors, evaluation instruments designed to measure achievement in fire prevention and satisfaction with the program, fire prevention information for teachers to disseminate to their students, and information regarding the availability of additional teaching aids. Teachers report that all the necessary materials are included for the implementation of the complete Learn Not to Burn educational program in their classroom.

Benefits. The research and development phase of Learn Not to Burn evaluated the effectiveness of implementing the program in seven urban and suburban sites involving 4,000 students and 200 teachers. The impact of the curriculum on both knowledge and practice was found to be significantly better for those children participating in the program versus those who had no exposure to a fire safety curriculum. Parents reported being highly satisfied with their children's involvement in the program. Also, teachers gave highly positive ratings to the curriculum in terms of its value and usefulness. Learn Not to Burn's acceptance and application within the educational community appears to be firmly established.

Limitations. To date, there have been no reported long-term follow-up studies investigating the impact of Learn Not to Burn in reducing the incidence of juvenile involvement in unsafe firestarts. Although the general merit of fire prevention programs in the schools cannot be argued, it would be useful to have data to substantiate these claims. In addition, while the Learn Not to Burn materials are comprehensive and produced at a high level of quality, not all school districts may be willing to allocate a proportion of their budget to purchase these educational supplies. Nevertheless, the monetary output may well be worth the costs of preventing just one significant fire.

C. Knowing About Fire

Functions. Knowing About Fire is a relatively new elementary school curriculum designed to teach children about the wonders and the limitations of fire. It is developed by a group of educators, psychologists, and fire service professional who also have been involved in developing juvenile firesetter programs. It was conceived as an additional educational package designed to complement the Learn Not to Burn program. The activities in the curriculum are appropriate for kindergarten through third grade and can be implemented by classroom teachers. They provide children with "hands-on" experience designed to teach them about the power of fire, how quickly it can spread, and how vulnerable they are with respect to its power.

Target Populations. This curriculum is designed to be used in the elementary school classroom for children in kindergarten through third grade. There are some activities also directed at the parents of these school-age children.

Users. The activities in the curriculum are designed by a classroom teacher and they are intended to be implemented by kindergarten through third grade classroom teachers.

Content. The activities in Knowing About Fire address children's curiosity about fire. They attempt to go beyond programs which have been developed to help get children out of fire once it has started. They provide information about the nature of fire, the power

of a single match, and the rapidity with which fire spreads. These activities are designed to promote discussion so that students can think through the possible consequences of fireplay by themselves or their siblings. Some of these activities include games, crossword puzzles, songs, and creative writing projects. There are some activities included for parents to remind them of the need to be aware of how available firestarting materials are to their children.

Benefits. Preliminary research and development efforts demonstrate that teachers find the concepts presented in the activities useful and the presentation of the materials clear so that they are easily incorporated in their curriculum. Students report that they are enthusiastic about participating in the activities and they seem to derive the intended benefits.

Limitations. This is a newly developed curriculum, and as such, needs broader application before its effectiveness can be clearly determined.

D. Fire Safety Skills Curriculum

Functions. In the state of Oregon, school personnel in cooperation with the fire service developed, published and implemented a skills oriented curriculum designed to assist primary and secondary school students in mastering fire prevention and survival skills. The Fire Safety Skills Curriculum provides each school grade with a set of expectations, including measurable learning objectives, a specific set of fire safety activities, and methods designed to measure knowledge acquisition. In-service training is offered by fire departments to schools to implement the curriculum.

Target Populations. The Fire Safety Skills Curriculum is intended for students in kindergarten through eleventh grade.

Users. The curriculum is written for teachers and designed to be implemented by them in the classroom.

Content. The curriculum presents eight fire safety skills which contribute to the goal of assisting students to protect themselves against the hazards of uncontrolled fire. Grade level expectations explain the fire safety learning outcomes expected of students. Each grade has different levels of expectations. Fire learning activities are suggested for each grade level to assist students in learning fire safety skills. These activities include learning the stop, drop, and roll technique, demonstrating how to light a match safely, developing and implementing a home fire safety survey, and many more direct fire-related experiences. They are designed to fit into a number of different subject areas including the language arts, math, science, health, and art. The implementation of these learning activities often involves the participation of local fire service personnel. Each activity has a measurable learning objective. Therefore, the successful completion of each fire learning activity can be evaluated. The curriculum also contains a number of quizzes that can be administered to assess learning acquisition.

Benefits. The curriculum was field tested by more than 100 Oregon teachers. Each fire safety learning activity is designed for minimal teacher preparation, to be as self-contained as possible, and to provide interesting, instructional and meaningful student experiences. Informal reports suggest that it is well received throughout the state of Oregon.

Limitations. There does not appear to be any documentation available detailing the impact of this curriculum in reducing juvenile involvement in fireplay and firesetting activities.

E. The Juvenile Crime Prevention Curriculum

Functions. The St. Paul, Minnesota Insurance Companies have sponsored a unique educational program aimed at teaching fire prevention to eighth and ninth graders, who in turn utilize their newly acquired information and skills to instruct fourth and fifth graders on the topic of fire safety. The two major objectives of this program are to teach fire safety skills to adolescents and to help these youth learn how to teach these skills to younger

students. There is a 12 week curriculum designed for teachers to implement this program in their classroom.

Target Populations. This educational program reaches two distinct groups of youth, adolescents in eighth and ninth grade and elementary school children in fourth and fifth grade.

Users. This program is to be implemented by eighth and ninth grade classroom teachers.

Content. The Juvenile Crime Prevention Curriculum not only teaches fire prevention to adolescents, but it also emphasizes general topics in crime prevention. The curriculum is designed to provide youth with information on arson, vandalism, property crimes, law enforcement, and the juvenile justice system. The curriculum consists of lesson plans on each of these topics for a 12 week course. There are exercises that teach the eighth and ninth graders how to apply their newly acquired knowledge of fire safety and how to prepare themselves to be student teachers. The curriculum also includes the participation of law-enforcement, probation, and juvenile justice personnel in teaching children not only the principles of crime prevention, but a sense of responsibility toward their school and their community. The program contains an evaluation component which requires participants to provide feedback on its effectiveness.

Benefits. Case reports suggest that both eighth and ninth grade and elementary school students report being highly satisfied with their participation in the program. In addition, student performance indicates that they also learn a significant amount of new material related to fire prevention. This curriculum not only educates two different age groups of children, it helps to build the self-confidence and self-esteem of adolescents by introducing them to new roles as teachers to younger students.

Limitations. While preliminary case reports are highly favorable about the impact of the program, there have been no attempts to assess whether this effort has deterred

children from participating in firesetting or other antisocial activities. Until such studies are undertaken, it is difficult to evaluate the actual benefits of the program.

F. Project Open House

Functions. Although the content of this program is somewhat difficult to replicate, it is included here because of the unique and graphic learning experience it provides for adolescent age school students. A cooperative effort between the fire service and the school district, the idea of Project Open House is to furnish a house as one normally would, set a fire in one room, extinguish it, and then utilize this as a learning experience for students. This process is known as a controlled or training burn. All events, from ignition to suppression and overhaul, are recorded on videotape and photographed with a 35mm camera. Students watch the entire progress of the fire as it is happening on the videotape. Then minutes after the blaze, they are allowed to tour the house escorted by firefighters. Thus, students are able to experience first-hand the consequences of fire.

Target Populations. There are a number of reasons why participation in this project is limited to adolescent age school children. First, younger children witnessing this type of fire experience may become fearful and anxious, and therefore not be able to understand it as a learning exercise. Second, public education programs are traditionally aimed at elementary school children, and middle school fire safety educational experiences are less common. Third, the adolescent age group includes many latchkey children, who are at fire risk because they are unsupervised at home after school until their parents return from work. Finally, adolescents represent a large percentage of the babysitting population, which needs to know about the dangers of fire and the proper response to emergencies.

Users. The implementation of Project Open House takes the combined cooperation of the fire service and the school district.

Content. Subsequent to watching the controlled burn on videotape, students receive a presentation by their school principal and firefighters regarding their impressions of the

fire. Then students are escorted through the burned house by firefighters. They immediately see the devastation in the room where the fire started and throughout the remainder of the house. A large cardboard poster is placed inside the house to remind them of the chronology of the fire events, from the first ignition, through triggering the smoke detector alarms on both levels of the house, to extinguishing the blaze. Each room contains its own safety message depending on the specific damage caused and the particular function of the room. For example, the melted telephone in the kitchen can stress the importance of staying as close as possible to the floor and leaving the home immediately to call for help from the neighbor's home. Once students return to the classroom there are further discussions about their understanding of the devastation that can be caused by fire.

Benefits. The primary advantage of such a program is to allow adolescents to see for themselves the potential destructive consequences of unsupervised and nonproductive firesetting.

Limitations. It is unclear whether this type of teaching strategy, as opposed to less elaborate and more inexpensive methods, is significantly more effective in discouraging adolescents from firesetting.

Decision Grid

Table 3.1 presents the decision grid summarizing information on school curriculum and programs designed for primary prevention. There are a number of different programs available utilizing a variety of teaching methods aimed at a wide range of youth from preschool through high school. Users can make their selections based on their needs and the intended impact and acceptability of these programs.

Table 3.1
Primary Prevention Decision Grid
School Curriculum and Programs

Method	Purpose	Source	Acceptability	Impact	Limitations
CTW's Fire Safety Project	Introduce preschoolers to fire safety	Manual and materials from CTW, New York, NY	Widely used and highly regarded by preschool teachers throughout U.S.	Effective use of popular preschool characters as communicators of fire safety	No formal evaluation of this approach
Learn Not to Burn	Classroom curriculum (K-8) teaching fire safety and prevention	Manual and materials from NFPA, Boston, MA	Extensively used in urban and suburban school districts throughout U.S.	Teaches 25 key behaviors resulting in competent fire safety schools	No long-term follow-up studies of effectiveness
Knowing About Fire	Classroom curriculum (K-3) presenting hands-on fire learning activities	Manual from state of New York	A new program pilot-tested in a sample of schools	Good initial reception by students and teachers	As yet no information on effectiveness
Fire Safety Skills Curriculum	Classroom curriculum (K-11) teaching mastery of fire survival skills	Manual from state of Oregon	Utilized by school districts throughout the state of Oregon	Minimal teacher preparation, self-contained, and easily implemented	No documentation of impact
The Juvenile Crime Prevention Curriculum	Teaching crime prevention and fire safety skills to adolescents who in turn teach them to younger children	The St. Paul insurance companies	Utilized in the school districts of the Minneapolis/ St. Paul cities	High satisfaction ratings from all levels of students and teachers	No formal studies assessing crime prevention
Project Open House	First-hand, graphic exposure to watching a controlled fire burn and destroy	Planned project by cooperating community agencies	Reported as a single episode learning activity by one community	Enthusiastically received by students, teachers and parents	Labor and cost intensive

Fire Service Programs

On both a national and local level, the fire service is active in developing, implementing and promoting efforts aimed at teaching children fire safety and prevention. Several fire service programs have been designed specifically on the problem of juvenile involvement in accidental and recurrent firesetting. The following are descriptions of selected prevention programs focused on juvenile firesetting. At the end of this section a decision grid is presented analyzing the dimensions relevant to the successful application of these programs.

A. National Fire Prevention Week

Functions. Each year the first week in October is designated by the federal government as National Fire Prevention Week. Usually there are national fire prevention projects planned by the U. S. Fire Administration (USFA) for this special week. In addition, many states kick off their own fire prevention projects during this week. Also, local fire departments may initiate fire safety activities in their community to recognize fire prevention week. Organized efforts at national, state, and local levels are aimed at increasing public awareness of the importance of fire safety.

Target Populations. National Fire Prevention Week activities are usually focused on all children and adolescents, regardless of whether they have histories of fireplay or firesetting. Recently there also have been efforts aimed at educating parents about teaching their children fire safety and prevention.

Users. The U. S. Fire Administration, State Fire Marshal Offices, and local fire departments can take part in developing projects for National Fire Prevention Week.

Content. The nature of the projects conducted during Fire Prevention Week will vary depending on who initiates and implements them. It is customary for new educational efforts or media campaigns to be launched during this time.

Benefits. The major advantage of National Fire Prevention Week is that it provides an organized effort for all levels of the fire service to promote fire safety to the public.

B. Media Campaigns

There are a number of efforts to use print and television media to educate the general public about the problem of juvenile firesetting. The following programs represent examples of both national and local attempts to promote fire safety messages through the use of the media. The Resource List at the end of this component describes how to obtain more information about these programs.

Curious Kids Set Fires. The most recent program developed by the U.S. Fire Administration is a press packet designed to stimulate public awareness about the problem of juvenile fireplay and firesetting. These press packets help state and local fire service personnel hold press conferences and distribute information regarding the nature and extent of accidental firesetting. This information is designed to educate the general public and, in particular, parents about what they can do if they discover their children involved in firestarting. Presumably this information will result in local newspaper articles instructing parents in how they can recognize and prevent accidental firesetting behavior in their children.

Big Fires Start Small. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) develops media kits which it promotes during National Fire Prevention Week. The theme of the most recent press kit, Big Fires Start Small, is based on recent findings by the NFPA indicating that children playing with fire is the leading cause of fire deaths among very young children. The media kit contains information regarding the nature and extent of the problem of children playing with matches and offers suggestions as to what families and their communities can do to prevent child-set fires.

Firebusters. A local television station, the fire service, the school district, and a popular restaurant chain combined efforts in Portland, Oregon to encourage children to learn fire

safety and prevention rules from watching their evening news. A checklist of important fire safety and prevention questions was developed and distributed to children in elementary schools. Then, each night for one week during the evening news, the answers to these questions were disclosed. Children were asked to complete their checklist and return them to their school. The local restaurant chain agreed to provide a free children's meal to every child returning the checklist. In addition, there were drawings for grand prize awards. All of the participating community agencies were pleased with the response and outcome of project. They are making plans for this to be an annual cooperative event between the local media, the fire service, the school district and corporate sponsors.

C. Fire Department Programs in Schools

It is the mandate of many public education divisions within fire departments to provide fire safety and prevention programs for their local schools. Educating children about the dangers of fireplay and firesetting are one of several teaching objectives of these programs. There are many innovative approaches utilized by public education programs to teach school children about the dangers of playing with fire. The following are some examples of the creative teaching methods employed by public education efforts in the schools.

Classroom visits. Each year for the last decade fire inspectors in Charlotte, North Carolina have conducted three one-hour sessions in fourth grade classes on fire safety and prevention. A major part of their teaching program focuses on helping children understand the nature and power of fire and the dangers and consequences of unsupervised firestarting. These fire inspectors also are responsible for operating the fire department's juvenile firesetter program. Therefore, through their work in the schools they are able to set-up effective linkages and referral mechanisms for evaluating school children involved in fireplay or firesetting activities. Classroom visits also are conducted by many other fire departments across the county.

Slide Presentations. Along with classroom visits, Prince George's County, Maryland has developed eight multi-image slide programs on fire safety and prevention. A series of

slide projectors coordinated by a microcomputer projects a three-screen video presentation with sound. Several of these media shows are directed at middle school students, with one teaching about how involvement in nonproductive firesetting can lead to arson arrests. This show emphasizes the legal and destructive consequences of participating in firesetting and arson-related activities. Fire department officials comment that this media presentation is well-received by students and teachers.

Films. As an annual project, Seattle, Washington's Fire Prevention Division develops, directs and produces a fifteen minute film on teaching juveniles fire safety tips. For their films they use local sports figures or other prominent citizens to help deliver their fire safety and prevention messages. These films are then used as one of several teaching aids in their visits to local schools.

Assemblies. Several fire departments, including Seattle, Washington and San Jose, California conduct assemblies to teach fire safety and prevention to groups of school children. These fire departments develop scripted presentations focused on teaching children the dangers of playing with fire. Seattle utilizes a talking robot, which physically resembles a fire hydrant, to interact with the school children. The robot is operated by remote control and is programmed to answer simple fire safety questions. San Jose trains delinquent or truant high school students as performers and entertainers. These students are then utilized in a show to demonstrate safe fire behaviors to school children. These assemblies represent an efficient method for delivering fire safety messages to large numbers of school children.

Resource Book on Public Fire Education Programs. The US Fire Administration has published a resource directory listing and describing 72 public fire education programs developed by fire departments across the country. It outlines the creative and innovative methods and approaches they have used in developing fire prevention and education programs. This book, Public Fire Education Today, is referenced in the Resource List at the end of this component.

Decision Grid

Table 3.2 presents the decision grid summarizing primary prevention programs which can be implemented by the fire service. In addition to National Fire Prevention Week, there are various types of media campaigns and school programs which represent viable options. Users can select one or more of these programs based on their plans for implementing an effective primary prevention effort in their community.

Law-Enforcement Programs

The National Crime Prevention Council has recently mounted an anti-crime campaign aimed at discouraging children from participating in dangerous and illegal activities. This campaign involved the development of a mascot, McGruff, the crime fighting dog, to deliver anti-crime messages to children. There are kits, posters, books and other materials available to law-enforcement agencies and other community organizations. These resources are designed to help communities build effective crime prevention programs. The Resource Directory at the end of this component contains more information on how to obtain these materials.

Improving Primary Prevention Programs

There are three major areas where improvements can be made in primary prevention efforts to teach children about the dangers of participating in unsupervised and nonproductive firestarts. First, there are virtually no systematic programs designed to help parents teach their children how to develop fire safety behaviors. Fire education can begin in the home if parents are aware of the activities they can do to educate their own children. Second, there needs to be a greater effort focused on teaching adolescents the dangers of participating in nonproductive firestarts. The majority of educational programs currently are aimed at elementary school children, however adolescents also must be reminded not only of the dangers of fireplay and firesetting, but of the potential destructive and legal consequences of participating in this type of activity. Finally, cooperative primary prevention efforts, like Portland, Oregon's Firebusters, can increase the visibility and impact of these programs and improve the chances of reducing juvenile involvement in nonproductive firesetting.

Table 3.2
Primary Prevention Decision Grid
Fire Service Programs

Method	Purpose	Source	Acceptability	Impact	Limitations
National Fire Prevention Week	To raise national awareness about fire safety and prevention	Activities supported by the USFA and local fire departments	Nationally and locally planned media events throughout U.S.	Increased public awareness of fire safety	Increased awareness but unclear impact on behavior
Media Campaigns					
Curious Kids Set Fires	Press packet promoting national media campaign on fireplay and fire-setting	USFA	Pilot-tested in several states	Well-received by states looking to mount media activities	Only a short-term impact o a long-term problem
Big Fires Start Small	National media kit designed to explain problem of children playing with matches	NFPA	Researched & developed based on statistics showing alarmingly high numbers of children playing with matches	Good reception by local fire departments	Services to help children must be available
Firebusters	Television broadcasts on evening news teaching fire safety	Portland, Oregon	With minor adjustments in presentation of program, good response from children and families	Continued support and expansion throughout Oregon	Must be a cooperative community effort
School Programs					
Visits	Education and exposure to fire department	Found in many communities across U.S.	Used by several fire departments throughout U.S.	Well-received by students	Short-term impact
Slide presentations	Visual education	Prince George's County, Maryland	Commonly used teaching method	Good reception from students	One-shot effect
Films	Visual education	Seattle, WA; NFPA	Effective teaching method	Well-liked by students	Single exposure
Assemblies	Participant education	Seattle, WA; San Jose, CA	Economical teaching of many	Positive response	Short-term effect
Public Fire Education Today	Resource Directory	USFA	Widely distributed throughout U.S.	Excellent resource	

Early Intervention

The fire service is the leading community agency involved in the development of early intervention programs for juvenile firesetters. The primary objective of early intervention programs is to identify children at-risk for participating in unsupervised fireplay and firesetting incidents. In addition, these programs are aimed at preventing the recurrence of first-time firesetting episodes motivated by accident, curiosity or experimentation. These objectives are accomplished by setting-up short-term evaluation, education, counseling and referral services designed to stop firesetting behavior and identify related psychosocial problems.

There are two types of early intervention program models operated by the fire service. The first program model is evaluation, education, and referral. This approach is the one most frequently employed by fire departments across the country and is the recommended strategy for building effective juvenile firesetting programs. To implement this model, fire departments must establish methods for screening and evaluating the firesetting risk of children and their families. These methods have been detailed in the Screening, Evaluation and Developing the Intervention Plan Component. The identification of risk levels allows fire departments to determine the most appropriate strategies for remediating the current firesetting problem. If children are identified as little risk, then it is likely that short-term education intervention will stop any further firesetting behavior. Fire departments have successfully implemented a number of different educational programs. If youth are identified as definite or extreme risk, while they may benefit from educational programs, they are likely to need core intervention services. Fire departments must know how to refer firesetters and their families to the appropriate service agencies.

The second program model is counseling intervention. There are some fire departments that not only screen, evaluate, and educate juvenile firesetters and their families, but also offer counseling services to stop the firesetting behavior and remediate the accompanying psychosocial problems. This counseling model requires significantly more resources to implement than the evaluation, education, and referral model. For example,

special program staff, such as mental health consultants, are needed for training and implementing counseling services. Therefore, the counseling model should be utilized only by fire departments which are capable of developing and maintaining significant intervention efforts for juvenile firesetters. There are a variety of counseling methods which have been employed by fire departments. The selection of these methods will depend on the availability of resources and training expertise to help fire departments implement specific counseling services. Evaluation, education, and counseling services offered by fire departments represent the maximum level of commitment to control and abate juvenile firesetting.

At the end of this section on early intervention, a decision grid is presented summarizing the major aspects of both program models. It is assumed that fire departments wanting to establish juvenile firesetter programs first will select one of the two intervention models - evaluation, education, and referral or counseling - and then proceed to determine which specific version of these programs best fits their needs. This later decision can be based on a review of the impact and risk associated with the implementation of each program.

Evaluation, Education, and Referral Programs

The following programs are examples of evaluation, education and referral interventions for juvenile firesetters currently operating in fire departments across the country. They were selected because certain features of these programs represent outstanding or exceptional aspects of the evaluation, education and referral program model. At the end of this section a decision grid is presented which summarizes the major aspects of these programs which must be considered to facilitate their successful implementation. Documentation on specific programs is provided in the Resource List at the end of this component.

A. The Juvenile Firesetter Program, Columbus, Ohio

Functions. The primary purpose of this Juvenile Firesetter Program is to prevent juveniles who are setting fires and playing with matches and lighters from staring additional fires. The majority of these juveniles are referred from fire investigators, with a smaller number coming from children's services and mental health agencies. These children and their families are evaluated using USFA's Interview Schedules. All youth attend 4-6 educational sessions. This educational segment of the program is one of the outstanding features of its operation. Those youth identified as definite or extreme risk are referred for further core intervention services. Follow-up evaluation forms are sent every six months for two years to participating families and the resulting data indicate a 7% recidivism rate.

Target Populations. The entire range of juvenile firesetters and their families can be screened, evaluated, educated and referred for additional services.

Users. This program is intended to be implemented by fire service personnel.

Content. While the format of this juvenile firesetter program represents a standard example of the evaluation, education and referral program model, the educational feature of this approach deserves special mention. Prior to their participation in the educational sessions, juveniles complete written pretests designed to assess fire safety knowledge. They then attend four to six educational sessions at their local firehouse, depending on their age and the history of their firesetting behavior. Audio-visual teaching aids are used extensively. The Official Fire Safety Manual, containing games and puzzles designed to teach fire safety and prevention rules, is used with all youth. Separate manuals have been developed for children 4-6 years, 7-9 years, and 9-12 years. In addition, the family does homework, including designing a Home Fire Escape Plan and conducting a home fire safety inspection. In the final educational meeting, children complete post-tests to assess the amount of increased knowledge of fire safety and prevention accrued from the program. This represents a comprehensive approach by fire service personnel to provide educational experiences for children at the firehouse.

Benefits. Youth participating in this program receive excellent educational exposure to fire safety and prevention information as well as access to the appropriate evaluation and referral services.

Limitations. There is a greater demand for this program than currently can be met, therefore there is a waiting list for children and their families. In addition, outside of recidivism data, there is no other reported information on the impact of the program. However, the program has been in operation for only two years. Therefore, as it continues to develop it is likely that more information on its effectiveness will be forthcoming.

B. Operation Extinguish, Montgomery County, Maryland

Functions. Operation Extinguish is one of the programs run by the Montgomery County Fire Department's Division of Fire Prevention. Youth are referred to fire prevention by their parents, from the youth division of the police department, and from the juvenile services administration. All juveniles are evaluated using family assessment methods and following the guidelines recommended by USFA's Interview Schedules. All children also attend fire safety classes conducted by the division of fire prevention. These classes represent an outstanding feature of this program. Families of juvenile firesetters are referred to a private mental health agency for at least six family counseling sessions . This also is a unique program feature. Firesetters and their families are referred for other services on an as-needed basis. Release from Operation Extinguish is contingent upon completion of the prescribed intervention plan.

Target Populations. Operation Extinguish screens and evaluates the entire range of juvenile firesetters. However, the program reports that their typical child is one who is between the ages of nine and fourteen and has a significant history of fireplay and/or firesetting.

Users. Fire service personnel can implement this program successfully.

Content. Operation Extinguish has two unique program features. The first is a highly structured format of fire education classes. Three two-hour fire safety classes are run for groups of juvenile firesetters. Firesetters attend the first two classes and may bring their siblings. Parents also attend the last class. Audio-visual aids are used along with a manual, A Question of Burning. Week one covers the history of fire facts. Fire prevention, recognition of fire hazards, escape planning and survival techniques are discussed. Arson and arson laws in the state of Maryland are reviewed. The homework, to be completed by week three, is assigned and consists of developing a home fire escape plan. Week two focuses on burn injuries. Films are shown and children participate in writing exercises designed to help them think about the potential consequences of firesetting. Week three summarizes fire safety rules for parents. Escape plans are reviewed and the importance of knowing how to react in fire emergencies is discussed. By the end of the third session, both children and parents report being satisfied with the educational experience.

The second unique program feature is that the majority of firesetters and their families are referred for at least six family counseling sessions. The entire family is encouraged to participate in these sessions, since it is likely that siblings also may be involved in fireplay and firesetting activities. Counseling sessions are tailored to meet the individual needs of families. Families participating in these sessions report that their communication is greatly improved as a result of these counseling sessions.

Benefits. The apparent advantage of this program is that it provides a comprehensive evaluation and education intervention for juvenile firesetters and their families. In addition, the referral of families for counseling is a unique and important feature which may help remediate some of the underlying psychosocial factors related to the firesetting problem.

Limitations. Apparently interest in supporting this program has waned in the last several months. Perhaps it would be useful for program staff to compile information regarding the effectiveness of Operation Extinguish in deterring juveniles from participating in further firesetting and other delinquent activities.

C. Fire-Related Youth (FRY) Program, Rochester, New York

Functions. The FRY program is housed in the Rochester Fire Department. It receives the majority of its referrals from within the fire department. When the program receives referrals, fire investigators conduct complete investigations of the firesetting incidents. In addition to investigating the scene and conducting a records check, investigators interview children and their parents. The interviews are not designed to draw definite conclusions about the psychosocial functioning of juveniles, rather they are intended to provide investigators with more information about the fire. The USFA Interview Schedules are used as guidelines during these interviews. After interviewing the parents, investigators meet with the child to talk about the incident and provide fire safety education. The exact nature of the education depends on the age of the child. The majority of juvenile firesetters interviewed are referred for additional services. The FRY program has excellent linkages to other community agencies and this is an exceptional feature of this operation. The FRY program follows all cases until the juveniles receive the necessary treatment or assistance. There are two well-documented manuals outlining the operations of the FRY program. These manuals represent a second outstanding feature of this program.

Target Populations. The FRY program evaluates the entire range of juvenile firesetters.

Users. The program is effectively implemented by fire investigators.

Content. There are two outstanding features of the FRY program. The first is their well-established linkages with numerous service agencies within their community. The FRY program can refer juvenile firesetters to one of four mental health agencies, the Police Department's Family and Crisis Intervention Team, Child Protective Services, Probation, or Family Court. This referral system also includes a dual waiver form that allows a free flow of information between the FRY program and all referral agencies. The solid referral network established by the FRY program ensures that children and their families will receive the services necessary to stop firesetting and remediate the related psychosocial problems.

The second exceptional program feature is the complete documentation of the FRY program in two sequential manuals. These manuals not only describe the operation of the program, but they report investigative studies concerning a number of different topics including a complete description of the population of firesetting juveniles and explanations of their firestarting behavior. These manuals provide visibility and credibility for the FRY program.

Benefits. This is a well-documented comprehensive program designed to evaluate and refer firesetting youth and their families for help in remediating their presenting problems.

Limitations. This program relies heavily on the referral agencies in their community to provide effective services to eliminate firesetting behavior and the accompanying psychosocial problems.

D. Juvenile Firesetter Program, Portland, Oregon

Functions. The primary goal of Portland's Juvenile Firesetter Program is to reduce the rate of property loss and fire injuries and deaths due to juvenile-related fires. The Portland Fire Bureau developed their Juvenile Firesetter Program to work with firesetting youth from the ages of seven to eighteen. The program offers evaluation, education, and referral services to these youth. In addition, they have implemented a number of unique program activities including the development of a statistical resource base to assess the incidence and prevalence rates of juvenile firesetting in the community, an active radio and television media campaign to educate the public about the problem of juvenile firesetting, and a state-wide resource directory listing all agencies capable of working with juvenile firesetters and their families.

Target Populations. Portland's Juvenile Firesetter Program is designed to work with curious and recurrent firesetters.

Users. The program can be implemented by fire service personnel.

Content. This program offers standard evaluation, education, and referral services. One of its unique contributions is supporting the development of a state-wide directory of juvenile firesetter programs and resource agencies. This directory provides an explanation of the service delivery system for treating juvenile firesetters in the state of Oregon. It lists by county the fire service, law-enforcement, mental health, and other agencies capable of providing help to juvenile firesetters and their families. The directory is widely distributed throughout the state, by the Oregon Council Against Arson, and there is a planned system for up-dating the information contained in it. The resource directory provides systematic documentation of the state-wide availability of services for juvenile firesetters.

Benefits. This program offers excellent local services as well as participation in the organization of state-wide efforts to identify services for firesetting youth and their families.

Limitations. The program provides comprehensive services to firesetting youth in their community. However, it would be informative if studies were conducted to assess the actual impact of their program in reducing juvenile firesetting rates.

Counseling Programs

There are some fire departments that take their services one step beyond evaluation, education and referral. A second program model, offering direct intervention services, has been applied successfully by a handful of fire departments. The majority of these programs provide some type of counseling intervention. Counseling services are viewed as an integral part of these juvenile firesetter programs. The following programs represent the range of counseling interventions currently used to work with juvenile firesetters. At the end of this section a decision grid is presented summarizing the salient characteristics distinguishing the successful application of these programs. Specific references documenting these programs are listed in the Resource Directory at the end of this component.

A. Juvenile Firesetter Counseling Program (JFCP), Dallas, Texas

Functions. The Dallas JFCP evaluates, educates and counsels juvenile firesetters. The majority of their cases are referred by fire investigators. Once cases are received, parents and children are asked to voluntarily participate in the program. Juveniles are screened and evaluated utilizing the USFA Interview Schedules as guidelines. They are classified according to the severity of their firesetting behavior. They then receive one to two counseling sessions where they participate in an interview graphing technique which is designed to help them recognize and change their feelings associated with their urge to firestart. In addition, they participate in one to two follow-up sessions where fire safety education rules are discussed. Juveniles and their families can be referred to other agencies for services, particularly if a serious fire was set or if a different or longer-term intervention is deemed necessary.

Target Populations. The Dallas JFCP handles the entire range of juvenile firesetters. They classify them into four major categories. The curious firesetters range in age from two to nine, they believe that they can control fire, and they do not understand its consequences. The problem firesetters range in age from four to 17, they understand the consequences of firesetting, but their firestarting represents feelings of anger, revenge, and spite. The delinquent firesetters set fires to cover-up other offenses such as burglary, theft, or homicide. The seriously disturbed firesetters firestart as an expression of severe psychopathology.

Users. Fire investigators are trained to implement every phase of this program from evaluation, education, and counseling to referral.

Content. The methods employed in the interview graphing sessions deserve particular mention. This technique requires children to describe the events preceding their most recent firestart, the fire, and the activities following the fire. These events are outlined on the horizontal axis of a graph. Four feelings associated with these events are indicated in different colors, from low to high, on the vertical axis of the graph. The feelings, happy,

sad, angry, and scared, are color-coded. The relationship between events and feelings are correlated. Juveniles are taught to identify their feelings and use them as a signal to change their behavior. They are taught to recognize when their feelings are leading to the urge to firestart. They are taught not to act on these feelings, but to substitute different actions in place of their urge to firestart. These alternative behaviors also are listed on the graph. If, in the following weeks, the youth again feel the urge to firestart, and they want to act on their feelings, they are encouraged first to call their counselor and talk over their feelings with them. In this way, juveniles are taught to recognize and control the underlying feelings which lead to their firestarting.

Benefits. The Dallas JFCP provides a comprehensive package of services within one setting for juvenile firesetters and their families.

Limitations. This type of counseling effort is likely to be successful in larger fire departments where there may be more resources available to offer these kinds of extensive services.

B. Cease Fire Club, Houston, Texas

Functions. The Juvenile Firesetter Program in Houston is organized in a slightly different way than other fire service programs. Although headed by Houston's Fire Marshal, the program is subcontracted to the Cease Fire Club, a community-based, non-profit organization. The majority of juveniles are referred to the program by law enforcement with fewer numbers being referred from social service agencies, parents and volunteer agencies such as the Red Cross. When a referral occurs, a preliminary assessment of the problem is usually made by telephone. If a significant firesetting problem exists, the juveniles and their families are referred to program counselors. These counselors conduct complete intake evaluations, which include the application of the interview graphing technique outlined in the previous section. Most youth and their families are then recommended to participate in short-term family counseling sessions. If serious or dangerous problems persist, the juvenile firesetters and their families can be referred for additional services.

Target Population. Houston's Juvenile Firesetter Program is set-up primarily to treat recurrent firesetting juveniles and their families.

Users. The program's evaluation and intervention services are designed to be implemented by trained mental health professionals.

Content. The centerpiece of Houston's Juvenile Firesetter Program is family counseling. A family systems approach is used to identify and address the problems underlying the firesetting behavior. A short-term crisis intervention model is implemented, with most juveniles and families attending 15 or fewer sessions. The goal is to redirect the firesetting behavior into a more acceptable direction. Any set fire is viewed as arson and this is discussed with the family. Families usually express fear and concern over their own safety and the safety of their home and property. Families want help to stop the firesetting behavior. Initially, counseling is provided on a weekly basis. As behaviors improve, sessions are scheduled bi-weekly and then monthly. Juveniles are released when match play has stopped and general behavior has improved at home and in school. If serious problems persist, it is recommended that further counseling be pursued.

Benefits. The Houston Juvenile Firesetter Program attempts to treat recurrent firesetters by offering an intervention designed to remediate the underlying causes of firesetting behavior.

Limitations. Funding is declining for this type of program intervention for juvenile firesetters. Systematic studies conducted to establish the cost-effectiveness of this juvenile firesetter program would greatly enhance the argument for retaining funds to support this community service.

C. The Firehawk Children's Program

Functions. The primary goal of the Firehawk Children's Program is to provide a comprehensive set of services to juvenile firesetters and their families. These services

include evaluation, education, intervention, and referral. The program utilizes a two-phase evaluation system in which an initial screening is conducted by trained firefighters using the USFA Interview Schedules and a follow-up evaluation is conducted by a trained mental health professional. Youth and families are classified according to risk levels, and little concern youth participate in an educational seminar on fire safety and prevention conducted at the local firehouse. Definite concern children are paired with firefighter volunteers who act as partners or "big brothers." Extreme risk youth are referred immediately to mental health or other core intervention services.

Target Populations. The Firehawk Children's Program is designed to handle the entire range of juvenile firesetters and their families.

Users. The program is intended to be set in place within fire departments, however, it also has been applied in other organizational settings, such as church groups and community-based non-profit agencies.

Content. The intervention component of the Firehawk Children's Program differs somewhat from the traditional counseling modality. The partnership program for firesetting youth is based on the finding that the majority of recurrent firesetters come from homes where there is an absent or inattentive father. By pairing firefighter volunteers to act as partners to these children a void is being filled in their lives. It is assumed that the strength of the relationships between children and firefighters will deter further firesetting behavior. Firefighters who volunteer for this program are trained in how to establish and maintain close, effective working relationships with youth. Firefighters learn how to be role models for these children while at the same time being someone with whom these youth can talk and spend time. The objective of this partnership between firefighters and juvenile firesetter is to eliminate firesetting behavior and redirect this nonproductive expression of aggression toward more positive outlets such as sporting activities and other recreational endeavors.

Benefits. The major advantage of the Firehawk Children's Program is that it provides the fire service with a creative alternative to the more traditional counseling and referral services.

Limitations. The implementation of the Firehawk Children's Program requires a certain level of commitment to resolving the problem of juvenile firesetting that many fire departments may not be willing to pursue. Nevertheless, preliminary data suggest that for urban communities, it is a cost-effective intervention service for firesetting juveniles and their families.

Decision Grid

Table 3.3 presents the decision grid summarizing the early intervention programs which can be implemented by the fire service. Two intervention models are represented - evaluation, education, and referral and counseling - accompanied by various program types. Users can select both an appropriate intervention model and a specific type of program within that model. Selection should be based on an analysis of the impact and risk associated with the implementation of each program.

Table 3.3
Early Intervention Decision Grid
Fire Service Programs

Method	Features	Source	Acceptability	Impact	Limitations
Evaluation, Education, and Referral					
Juvenile Firesetter Program	Strong educational component with written materials	Juvenile Firesetter Program Columbus, Ohio	A new program being well-received by participants	Good follow-up procedures; 7% recidivism	Resource unable to keep-up with demand
Operation Extinguish	Highly structured educational classes coupled with family counseling	Operation Extinguish Montgomery County, Maryland	Well-received by participants but community support recently declining	Reportedly low recidivism	No follow-up studies to support its impact
Fire-Related Youth Program	Strong interagency linkages and excellent documentation	FRY Program Rochester, New York	Follows USFA guidelines, acclaimed as a model program	Community cohesiveness	Over-reliance on referral chain
Juvenile Firesetter Program	Solid program with state-wide connections	Juvenile Firesetter Program Portland, Oregon	Part of the widely used and recommended USFA program model	Services aimed at high-risk fire areas in Portland	No formal studies on impact of the program
Counseling					
The Juvenile Firesetter Counseling Program	Effective interview graphing technique	The Juvenile Firesetter Counseling Program Dallas, Texas	Although utilized by many mental health professionals, only two fire departments have implemented it	Highly effective in stopping firesetting	Major commitment of resources
Cease Fire Club	Interview graphing coupled with family counseling	Cease Fire Club Houston, Texas	Follows USFA model, but adds family counseling services	Comprehensive services	No formal studies evaluating effectiveness
The Firehawk Children's Program	Partnerships with firefighter counselors	Documented in a manual	Follows USFA model, but adds partnership between firefighters and children as program feature	Long-term intervention approach, low recidivism	Significant commitment of time and resources

Core Intervention

Children and adolescents involved in recurrent firesetting behavior and displaying serious psychopathology are candidates for core intervention services. In addition, youth whose firesetting is willful or malicious and an expression of criminal intent also are likely participants for core intervention. Core intervention services are those modalities which provide long-term help for juvenile firesetters and their families to eliminate firesetting behavior and remediate the accompanying psychopathology. There are two major modalities of core intervention, mental health treatment and the probation and juvenile justice system.

Mental Health Intervention

Children and adolescents with histories of recurrent firesetting behavior and symptoms of psychopathology are likely to benefit from mental health treatment. These types of children may be identified initially by fire departments, law enforcement or the schools. If adequate screening and evaluation mechanisms are in place, these agencies should be able to refer these juveniles to the appropriate mental health professionals or agencies.

Depending on the severity of the firesetting and the psychopathology, there are a number of mental health program models designed to treat firesetting youth and their families. Specific outpatient psychotherapies have been developed to help children presenting with firesetting as their primary problem. Individual family and group therapy methods have been developed for juvenile firesetters. In addition, there are inpatient programs specifically designed to treat firesetting youth. Because many of these program models are recently developed, there is an obvious absence of empirical studies demonstrating their relative effectiveness. Nevertheless, preliminary clinical evaluations of these methods suggest that they are effective in stopping firesetting behavior and making significant adjustments in the accompanying psychopathology.

The following descriptions summarize the mental health modalities currently utilized to treat firesetting youngsters and their families. At the end of this section a decision grid is presented outlining the specific features related to the effective implementation of these procedures. Specific references describing the details of these program models are listed in the Resource Directory at the end of this component.

A. Outpatient Intervention

Individual Treatment. The primary focus of individual psychotherapy is on the immediate elimination of firesetting behavior, with a secondary emphasis on adjusting or changing the underlying psychopathology. Cognitive-emotive and behavior therapy are the two most highly developed approaches utilized in treating juvenile firesetters. Both of these psychotherapies employ short-term (six to eight sessions) strategies to stop firesetting behavior. In addition, although both of these psychotherapies use dramatically different approaches, preliminary evidence suggests that they are successful in eliminating firesetting behavior.

The major goal of cognitive-emotive therapy is to teach firesetters how to recognize the urge to firestart, interrupt the behavior before its starts, and substitute socially appropriate types of behaviors to express their underlying emotions. The primary mechanism developed to implement the cognitive-emotive approach is a relative uncomplicated procedure called the interview graphing technique. This technique was described earlier because it also has been applied by the Dallas Fire Department in their counseling program for firesetting youth. This procedure involves youth constructing a written graph correlating their feelings with the events leading up to and following their most recent firestart. They are taught to recognize their feelings associated with their urge to firestart and stop themselves before they act on them. This graphing technique is used in conjunction with short-term psychotherapy focused on helping youth understand the general patterns of their feelings and how they influence and guide their behavior. One follow-up study revealed that a group of juveniles participating in this type psychotherapy evidenced a 7% recidivism rate. Unfortunately this study did not include a control group, therefore it is difficult to make any definitive conclusions about the relative effectiveness of this psychotherapy.

There are a number of behavior therapy approaches reported as effective in abating firesetting. The predominant behavior therapy methods employed either alone or in combination are punishment, reinforcement, negative practice or satiation, and operantly structured fantasies. Two case studies report the successful application of various methods of punishment which includes the use of threats, such as work penalties. Sometimes the use of punishment is coupled with positively reinforcing youth when they find and return to their parents conspicuously hidden empty matchbooks. Negative practice procedures, such as scrubbing the fire residue from a metal basin, coupled with the use of positive reinforcement to encourage more socially appropriate behaviors, also have been reported as successful in stopping severe and recurrent firestarting behavior. One behavior therapy case study avoided the application of punishment methods or negative fire experiences by utilizing a positive reinforcement program coupled with the implementation of operantly structured fantasies. While data indicate that these procedures are effective in eliminating firesetting behavior, this evidence emerges from single case studies. Consequently, until replication studies are conducted, the wide-spread application of these procedures should remain guarded.

Family Treatment. There are only three cases reported in the literature utilizing brief (three to six sessions) family psychotherapy to successfully treat juvenile firesetters. Two of the three cases employed the method of teaching family members how to safely ignite and extinguish matches in a controlled setting within the therapist's office. This controlled firestarting task was used as a vehicle to restructure the existing patterns of family communication and interaction. In particular, attention was focused on restoring the appropriate amount of parenting authority and re-establishing communication between children and their parents regarding household rules designed for the safety and protection of the family. In the third case, the child's firesetting was viewed as the overt symptom of a dysfunctional family system. Family therapy sessions were focused on a recognition of the underlying distress and helping family members to identify the changes that needed to happen to reshape the nature of their interactions. In all three cases follow-up studies indicated the successful elimination of firesetting behavior, and a higher level of satisfaction among family members regarding patterns of communication and interaction. While these

clinical reports are encouraging, the success of family psychotherapy in treating firesetting cases deserves more systematic application and evaluation.

Group Treatment. There is a recently developed group therapy program designed specifically for firesetting youth and their families called Flame Out. There are two possible formats for this group therapy program. The first format is designed for parents of young (under six years) firesetting children. It is intended to be implemented in six weekly two-hour group sessions. Each week's group has a particular focus or theme, starting with a general orientation, and moving to such topics as fire safety education and prevention, effective parenting skills, expression of feelings, and home behavior management. The second format is a parents and children's group, which is designed for juvenile firesetters ranging in age from 7 to 12 and their parents. These groups run for 10 weeks, beginning with a combined introductory session with both parents and children, and moving to separate groups for each. During these group sessions both parents and children learn various strategies for managing the stress which is hypothesized to be directly related to the occurrence of firesetting behavior. In addition, information on fire safety education is reviewed in the group session. These group therapy approaches and the stress management methods employed to treat juvenile firesetters and their families are well-documented in a training manual cited in the Resource Directory at the end of this component. To date, two pilot programs have been completed. While there have been some individual reports from families participating in Flame Out that firesetting behaviors have abated, more rigorous data must be compiled to determine the long-term effects of this program in eliminating firesetting behavior and improving the quality of life for these children and their families.

Group therapy for adolescents engaged in firesetting is also conducted in Providence, Rhode Island. The task of the treatment is to facilitate the management of issues such as poor self-esteem, generalized helplessness, and relationships with others. Education about the dynamics of firesetting is also a key component. The Resource List contains the contact for additional information.

B. Inpatient Intervention

Inpatient treatment programs for firesetting youth have been influenced by two major types of therapeutic philosophies. The first is a more traditional, psychodynamic approach where the treatment emphasis is on the nature of the therapeutic alliance formed between children and program staff. Both individual and family psychotherapy are the techniques employed and the treatment program is long-term (ranging from six months to two years). The second theoretical approach is behavioral, where specific behaviors are identified for change and discrete interventions are designed to adjust these behaviors. The firesetting youth are the primary focus of the behavior therapy methods, with parents and family members included in the therapeutic endeavor once the firesetting behavior has been eliminated. Behavior therapy programs tend to be relatively short-term (four to eight weeks) and are currently the most widely offered inpatient approach to the treatment of juvenile firesetters.

The most recently developed inpatient program designed specifically for juvenile firesetters and their families is comprised of three major phases. In the first phase, youth enter a hospital setting for a four week stay. During this time, they participate in a series of behavioral exercises in which a choice must be made between toys and firestarting materials. These exercises are observed by therapists out of the view of the children. If they choose matches and lighters as opposed to other non-fire-related toys, the therapist intervenes and conducts a debriefing. The debriefing focuses on helping the children realize the experienced emotions associated with choosing firestarting materials. The result of these exercises is that children are left with a mild aversion to firestarting materials. During the second phase intensive family psychotherapy is employed while the children are still hospitalized to adjust those environmental conditions within the family which are associated with the emergence of firesetting behavior. The third phase focuses on reentry into the family and community. Outpatient family psychotherapy is used and an intensive effort is made to provide special community support services such as schooling and structured activities. At the end of the third phase, it is expected that children will return to the family and social environment, not participate in firestarting activities, and function

adequately within their interpersonal and social milieu. Although one source indicates that there have been no relapses in 100 cases treated in a two year period, there have been no formal clinical or empirical studies conducted to examine the relative effectiveness of this inpatient approach in treating firesetting youth.

Decision Grid

Table 3.4 presents the decision grid summarizing the outpatient and inpatient treatment programs for juvenile firesetters. There are a number of effective treatment approaches which can be used to abate recurrent firestarting. Users can select the method which best suits their professional orientation and style of working.

Probation and Juvenile Justice

When law-enforcement agencies arrest juveniles for arson, the juveniles enter the probation and juvenile justice system. Although the specific methods of these systems vary from state to state, the general procedure is that firesetters and their families receive a comprehensive evaluation by probation counselors. The primary objective of this assessment is to determine whether the firesetting behavior represents criminal intent. If there is reasonable doubt regarding the criminal intent of the firesetting behavior, probation counselors will strongly recommend to families to seek counseling. In essence, counseling becomes the condition of probation. Families are warned that if they do not comply with the counseling requirement, then formal charges can be brought against their children. In addition, it may be recommended that these children become involved in restitution or payback programs. These strategies are typically referred to as diversion programs in that they help juvenile firesetters avoid detention and incarceration mandated by the juvenile justice system.

Table 3.4
Core Intervention Decision Grid
Mental Health Programs

Method	Purpose	Source	Acceptability	Impact	Limitations
Outpatient Treatment					
Cognitive-Emotive Therapy	Recognition and interruption of the urge to firestart using the interview graphing technique	Documented in professional mental health journals	Widely applied not only with firesetters, but with other delinquent populations	Reportedly low (7%) recidivism with difficult (recurrent) firesetters	No information on relative effectiveness of method
Behavior Therapy	Abate firesetting behavior using punishment, reinforcement, negative practice, or fantasies	Documented in behavior therapy literature	Applied in single-case studies	Highly effective in cases with reported follow-up	Not applied beyond single case studies
Family Therapy	Improving and restructuring patterns of communication and interaction	Documented in family therapy literature	Three single case studies reported	Effective in all cases with follow-up	Small number of applications
Group Therapy	Flame Out teaches stress and home management skills within fire safety instruction	Documented in a manual	Pilot-tested	Reported successful in preliminary stages	New and untested method
Inpatient Treatment					
Behaviorally-Oriented Juvenile Firesetter Treatment Program	Short-term inpatient evaluation and treatment using satiation, family therapy, and re-entry activities	Reported in fire journals	Private psychiatric hospitals in California and Oregon	Reported effective with low recidivism	Labor and cost intensive; no follow-up or impact studies reported

There are two major types of diversion program models for firesetting youth. The first type are those programs operated for the general group of first-time offenders, regardless of the nature of their criminal activity. Although there may be no activities directed specifically at the firesetting problem, these programs focus on teaching juveniles and their parents certain skills which will help them avoid future involvement with law enforcement and the juvenile justice system. The second type of program model are those diversion efforts which offer interventions aimed specifically at the firesetting or arson-related activity. The majority of these interventions are juvenile firesetter programs operated by fire departments. Some local fire departments have agreed to focus part of their juvenile firesetter program activities on youth involved in serious firesetting. One example of general diversion programs and one example of firesetting diversion programs follow. The Resource List at the end of this component outlines who to contact for more information about these programs.

For those juveniles for whom diversion programs have failed or whose firesetting clearly represents arson, detention or incarceration according to the requirements of the law in a juvenile justice facility becomes the remaining intervention option. There is one juvenile firesetter program designed specifically for convicted and incarcerated young arsonists. This program is described and the Resource Directory at the end of this component lists who to contact for more information. Other than this particular program, there appears to be no systematic effort underway to provide any special counseling or treatment aimed at stopping the involvement of incarcerated youth in future firesetting activities.

At the end of this section a decision grid is presented which summarizes the major features of programs designed to help arrested or incarcerated firesetters. Probation and juvenile justice personnel can select an appropriate approach for implementing an effective diversion or education intervention for arsonists.

A. General Diversion Programs

The First Offender Program, Dallas Texas. Juveniles who are arrested for arson, but who do not have a history of other delinquent activities or arrest have the option of participating in the First Offender Program rather than going to juvenile court. The First Offender Program has two major components. After an intake evaluation, youth are referred to one of these two components based on their need and the severity of their firesetting and other psychosocial problems.

The first program component is short-term and involves two groups meetings. During the first meeting children are taught decision-making skills. The underlying principle of this approach is that children do know right from wrong but they have made some bad decisions which have led them into trouble. At the same time, parents are introduced to some parenting methods which will help them increase their management skills in the home. During the second meeting a video presentation is given which reinforces the importance of parental control and the consequences of bad decisions on the part of juveniles. A group discussion follows and then parents and children are released from the program.

The second program component is long-term and involves three phases. The first phase, intake, involves a comprehensive assessment which takes place over four meetings between counselors and juveniles and their families. This assessment focuses on evaluating the home, school, friends, and free-time of youth, and determining their strengths and weaknesses. Also, specific goals are defined for helping children and their families. The second phase, treatment, consists of five weekly group meetings in which juveniles and parents meet separately and together. The topics of these meetings include control and communication, discipline, contracting, and praise. Parents work on home management skills while children learn to set specific goals for themselves. These goals involve three areas: physical, such as a regular exercise program; emotional, such as learning how to deal effectively with authority figures or controlling angry feelings; and intellectual, such as establishing regular study habits and improving study skills. The third phase of the program, follow-up, involves three to four monthly group meetings. The skills and goals

parents and children learn and set are evaluated and reinforced. Through the use of audio-visual methods the program encourages families to continue applying what they have learned. Families are released from the program at the end of the follow-up period when program staff are satisfied that families have successfully met their treatment objectives.

Juveniles and families completing the First Offender Program are awarded a certificate of merit. The program has no additional contact with the families. Statistical studies show that the local juvenile delinquency rate of 50% declines to 22.6% when juveniles complete this program.

B. Juvenile Firesetter Diversion Programs

Operation Extinguish, Montgomery County, Maryland. The state of Maryland has enacted two strong state laws regarding juvenile firesetting and arson. The first law requires restitution for the first $500 in damages causes by fires set by juveniles. The second law holds juveniles responsible for their firesetting. The age of accountability for fireplay and firesetting is seven; at which time youth can be charged with the crime of arson. Enforcement of this law provides the police department and the juvenile justice system with the power to ensure youth and family participation in Operation Extinguish as an alternative to arrest and prosecution. Participation in the program also may come about as a result of being found guilty of firesetting or arson. In either case, participation can be combined with restitution and or alternative community service.

Juveniles participating in Operation Extinguish are between the ages of nine and fourteen, they have a significant history of fireplay and firesetting, they do not comprehend the seriousness of their firesetting behavior, and their parents do not understand the seriousness of their problem. Participation in Operation Extinguish lasts three months. During this time, juveniles attend three two hour fire safety classes. These classes have been described in detail in a previous section on early intervention evaluation, education, and referral programs. In addition, juveniles and their families attend six or more family counseling sessions designed to improve communication skills and prevent further

participation in delinquent activities. Juveniles involved in fires which cause serious damage or those who have been found guilty of arson, participate in restitution and community service programs. Upon satisfactory completion of the program, cases are closed and the juvenile records of these youth are expunged.

C. Juvenile Firesetter Programs for Incarcerated Arsonists

Juvenile Firesetter Program, Upper Arlington, Ohio. One component of the Juvenile Firesetter Program in Upper Arlington, Ohio is a specific effort to educate juveniles incarcerated for the crime of arson. A 12 week educational program is offered to convicted arsonists which includes fire education safety inspections of facilities, field trips to fire stations, and visits to Children's Hospital (which includes a Burn Center), where children give fire hats to patients. These youth also participate in other fire safety activities. For example, they become involved in writing letters to the governor and the heads of facilities citing fire hazards, such as noting the absence of smoke detectors, sprinkler systems and escape plans. As a result of these letter writing efforts many of these problems are rectified. Another example of their activities is the writing and staging of a play on fire safety. These educational efforts are focused on teaching these youth the value of helping others. In addition, an emphasis is placed on exploring and developing more appropriate skills for functioning in their home and school environments once they are released from detention. This is a unique educational program focused on a high-risk group of youth. If these efforts can be shown to successfully abate firesetting in this population of youth, then similar programs should be encouraged on a nationwide basis.

Decision Grid

Table 3.5 presents the decision gird summarizing probation and juvenile justice programs for juvenile firesetters. The major feature of these programs are outlined so that users can assess the impact and risk of implementing these procedures. It is suggested that youth participating in one of these effective diversion or education programs are less likely to continue to engage in firesetting or other delinquent activities.

Table 3.5
Core Intervention Decision Grid
Probation and Juvenile Justice Programs

Method	Purpose	Source	Acceptability	Impact	Limitations
The First Offender Program Dallas, Texas	General diversion offering assessment, treatment, and follow-up intervention	There are various program models around the country	For first offenders, viable alternative to incarceration	Decline of delinquency rate from 50% to 22.6%	Missing or diverting seriously disturbed offenders
Operation Extinguish Montgomery County, Maryland	Evaluation education, family counseling, restitution, and community service	Operation Extinguish Montgomery County, Maryland	Acclaimed as a model program, but not yet replicated	Reportedly low recidivism rates	Serious commitment of resources, but may be worth the outlay
Juvenile Firesetter Program Upper Arlington, Ohio	Fire safety education program for incarcerated arsonists	Documented in written materials. Juvenile Firesetter Program Upper Arlington, Ohio	Supported by local agencies, but not replicated in other communities	Well received by juveniles and local participating community agencies	No data on effectiveness

Resource List

Primary Prevention

School Curriculum and Programs

1. CTW's Fire Safety Project
   Sesame Street Fire Safety Resource Book

   Contact: Children's Television Workshop
   New York, New York

2. Learn Not to Burn

   Contact: National Fire Protection Association
   1 Batterymarch Park
   Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

3. Knowing About Fire

   Contact: Paul Schwartzman
   National Fire Service Support Systems, Inc.
   919 Westfall Road, Suite C-202
   Rochester, New York 14618

4. Fire Safety Skills Curriculum

   Contact: Chuck Campbell
   Deputy Fire Marshall
   Eugene Department of Public Safety
   777 Pearl Street, Rm #107
   Eugene, OR 97401

5. The Juvenile Crime Prevention Curriculum

   Contact: Public Relations Department
   The St. Paul Companies
   385 Washington Street
   St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

6. Project Open House

Contact: Richard A. Marinucci
Farmington Hills Fire Department
Farmington Hills, Michigan

Fire Service Programs

1. National Fire Prevention Week

2. Curious Kids Set Fires

Contact: US Fire Administration
National Fire Academy
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

3. Big Fires Start Small

Contact: National Fire Protection Association
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

4. Firebusters

Contact: Jim Crawford
Office of Community Relations
Portland Fire Bureau
55 Southwest Ash
Portland, OR 97204

5. Public Fire Education Today

Contact: US Fire Administration
National Fire Academy
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Fire Department Programs in Schools

1. Slide Presentations

   Contact: MH (Jim) Estepp, Chief
   Office of the Fire Chief
   Fourth Floor East
   Largo Government Center
   9201 Basil Court
   Landover, MD 20785

2. Films

   Contact: Inspector Jim Sherman
   Fire Prevention Division
   Fire Marshal's Office
   Seattle, WA

3. Assemblies

   Contact: Inspector Jim Sherman
   Fire Prevention Division
   Fire Marshal's Office
   Seattle, WA

   Contact: Captain Mark Mooney
   Fire Prevention
   San Jose Fire Department
   San Jose, CA

Law-Enforcement Programs

1. McGruff

   Contact: The National Crime Prevention Council
   1700 K Street, N.W., Second Floor
   Washington, DC 20006

Early Intervention

Evaluation Education and Referral Programs

1. The Juvenile Firesetter Program, Columbia, Ohio

   Contact: Kevin Reardon
   Juvenile Firesetter Program
   Bureau of Fire Prevention
   300 N. Fourth Street
   Columbia, OH 42315

2. Operation Extinguish, Montgomery County, Maryland

   Contact: Mary Marchone
   Division of Fire Prevention
   101 Monroe Street
   Rockville, MD 20850

3. Fire Related Youth (FRY) Program, Rochester, New York

   Contact: Jerold Bills
   FRY Program
   Rochester Fire Department
   Room 306
   Public Safety Building
   Civic Center Plaza
   Rochester, New York 14614

4. Juvenile Firesetter Program, Portland Oregon

   Contact: Steven Muir
   Portland Fire Bureau
   55 Southwest Ash
   Portland, OR 97204

Counseling Programs

1. Juvenile Firesetting Counseling Program, Dallas Texas

   Contact: Inspector Raymond Lee
   Arson and Fire Inspection
   Fire Department
   2014 Main Street, Rm. 404
   Dallas, TX 75201

2. Cease Fire Club, Houston Texas

   Contact: Juvenile Firesetters Prevention Program
   Houston Cease Fire Club
   3939 Essex Lane
   Houston, TX 77027

3. The Firehawk Children's Program

   Reference: Gaynor, J., et al. (1984). The Firehawk Children's Program: A Working Manual. San Francisco: The National Firehawk Foundation

Core Intervention

Mental Health Programs

Outpatient Programs

1. Cognitive-Emotive Psychotherapy

Bumpass, ER, Brix, RJ, & Preston D. (1985). A community-based program for juvenile firesetters. Hospital and Community Psychiatry, 36(5), 529-532.

Bumpass, ER, Fagelman, FD, & Brix, RJ. (1983). Intervention with children who set fires. American Journal of Psychotherapy, 37, 328-345.

2. Behavior Therapy

Carstens, C. (1982). Application of a work penalty threat in the treatment of a case of juvenile firesetting. Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry, 13, 159-161.

Holland, CJ. (1969). Elimination by the parents of firesetting behavior in a 7-year old boy. Behavior Research and Therapy, 7 ,135-137.

Kolko, DJ. (1983). Multicomponent parental treatment of firesetting in a developmentally disabled boy. Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry, 14, 349-353.

Stawar, TL. (1976). Fable mod: Operantly structured fantasies as an adjunct in the modification of fire-setting behavior. Journal of Behavior and Experimental Psychiatry. 7, 285-287.

3. Family Psychotherapy

Eisler, RM. (1974). Crisis intervention in the family of a firesetter. Psychotherapy: Research, Theory, and Practice, 9, 76-79.

Madanes, C. (1981). Strategic family therapy. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass.

Minuchin, S. (1974). Families and family therapy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

4. Group Therapy

Monaco, C. (1988). Flame Out. Unpublished manuscript. Phoenix, Arizona.

Joseph Richardson
Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program
Department of Public Safety
209 Fountain Street
Providence, RI 02903

Inpatient Treatment

Birchill, LE. (1984). Portland's firesetter program involves both child and family. American Fire Journal, 23, 15-16.

Probation and Juvenile Justice

A. General Diversion

The First Offender Program, Dallas Texas

Contact Dallas Police Department
Youth Section
106 S. Harwood Street
Room 225
Dallas, Texas 75201

B. Juvenile Firesetter Diversion Programs

Operation Extinguish, Montgomery County, Maryland

Contact: Mary Marchone
Division of Fire Prevention
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

C. Juvenile Firesetter Programs for Incarcerated Arsonists

Juvenile Firesetter Program, Upper Arlington, Ohio

Contact: John Haney, Chief
Upper Arlington Fire Department
Upper Arlington, Ohio

Component 4

Referral Mechanisms

Referral Mechanisms

Introduction

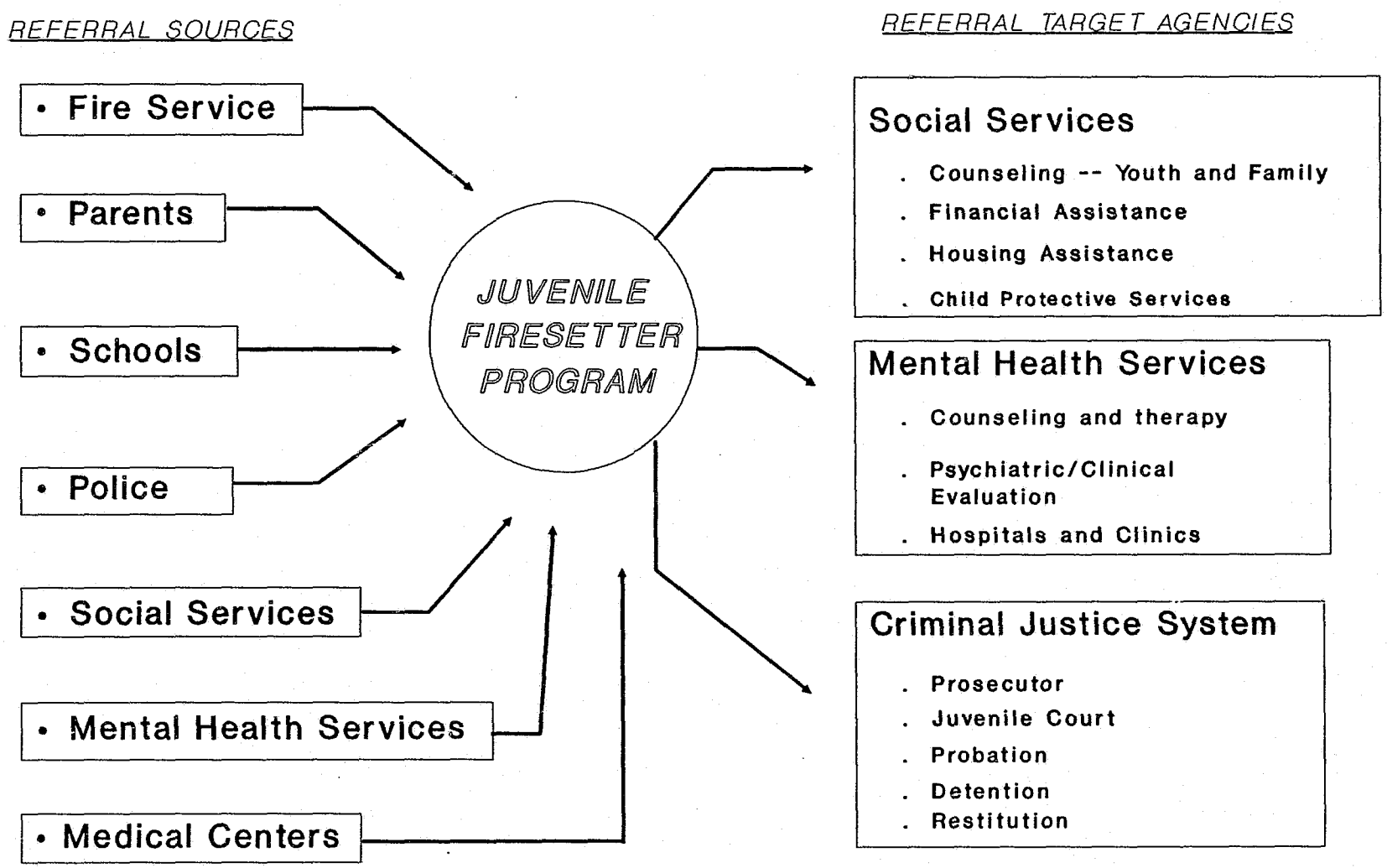
Juvenile Firesetter Programs should occupy a central position between the sources of juvenile firesetters (fire service, schools, parents) -- the people who detect the firesetter -- and the target agencies (counseling services, juvenile court, etc.) -- the agencies or people who provide specialized treatment or sanctions to the juvenile firesetter.

In most programs a substantial number of firesetters will be detected by fire service personnel and brought to the program (which is usually located within the fire service) for some education/intervention; consequently, many of the "referrals" occur within the fire service and do not require the assistance of others, either in finding the firesetters or addressing their problems. The typical case of this kind is the young child without any significant pathology who is identified by a fire investigator, referred to the program, "treated" in some fashion, and released. In many jurisdictions these may be the most frequent kind of cases. However, all other cases require effective referral systems so that (a) people outside the fire service will bring the firesetter to the attention of the program, and (b) the juvenile firesetter who exhibits serious problems of adjustment or delinquency can receive the appropriate additional resources. The screening and intervention activities conducted within the program represent the very heart of any program, but they are not at all sufficient to insure that all firesetting youths are receiving the help (or sanctions) they deserve. Indeed, without a wide range of referral sources the program will never see a sizable segment of the juvenile firesetter population, and without the appropriate agencies and individuals to whom youths can be sent for additional help, many firesetters (especially the more troubled youths) will never receive the services they need.

A graphic depiction of the desired referral network is shown in Figure 4.1. Typical sources of referrals are shown on the left, with the fire service typically providing most of the referrals, followed by parents, schools, etc. On the right are the major types of referral

Figure 4.1

JUVENILE FIRESETTER REFERRAL NETWORK



targets, agencies that can provide the appropriate additional services to the juvenile firesetter and the family.

Several points of this figure deserve special attention. First, it shows a large number and variety of possible referral sources and target agencies. Although these may vary widely across jurisdictions, it is important that the program give serious consideration to developing referral arrangements with all such agencies and groups. Second, two of the three key target agencies -- social services and mental health agencies -- may also serve as referral sources as well. Third, this depiction is necessarily an over simplification of the actual sequence of events involved in many referrals. For example, as shall be discussed below, the arrangements among the criminal justice agencies, the program, and the mental health and social service agencies can be quite complicated , involving several decision points and transfers for any one case. Fourth, some referral mechanisms will be for the purpose of merely recording and tracking juvenile firesetter cases that are not actually seen by the program.

Identifying Referral Sources and Target Agencies

The foundation for the referral mechanisms is laid in the early stages of program planning and development. Indeed, because the initial establishment of effective referral mechanisms occurs in the planning and coordination stage, the reader is encouraged to consult that section of the Guidelines for additional information on the initial development of referral mechanisms. Similarly, because the development of certain referral sources (e.g., parents) requires an effective public relations campaign, the section on publicity and outreach is also very relevant to this topic.

The first step in the development of effective referral mechanisms is the identification of all potential referral sources and target agencies. The types of agencies and groups shown in Figure 4.1 should serve as a start for the identification of referral sources and agencies to be developed. Once a list of referral types is developed, the program should complete a worksheet providing the names of specific organizations, a

description of the preferred referral arrangement, the individuals who will serve as the primary contact or liaison to the program, and their address and telephone number.

To some degree, much of the identification process will have been accomplished during the planning and coordination stage. However, the individuals from the various agencies who will serve as the functional contacts for referrals may be different from those who are first involved in planning and coordination and the actual approval of the referral relationship. Therefore, it is likely that at least two levels of agency officials will be involved in the development of these mechanisms: (1) Relatively high-level officials with the authority to bind the agency to a referral agreement, and (2) individuals who will have continuing responsibility for the operation of the referral mechanism.

Although the selection of referral agencies will depend on the particular nature of the juvenile fire setter problem in the area, virtually all programs in jurisdictions of medium-to-large size should explore the possibility of referral arrangements with all the types of agencies listed in Figure 4.1. The only exceptions will be small jurisdictions that do not have social and mental health service agencies or the multiple levels of the criminal justice system. If counseling and therapy services are not available locally, the program should investigate the possibility of referral arrangements with such agencies in neighboring towns and cities.

The target agencies selected will also be dependent, at least to some degree, on the nature and severity of the problems of the juvenile firesetters; e.g., the extent to which the youths display serious problems of adjustment and delinquency, whether family counseling is required, etc. We suggest, however, that the referral mechanism be arranged (at least the groundwork laid) for all the major target agencies so that if the need arises, the resources will be there.

When soliciting source referral agencies, one need not be as concerned with the quality of the particular agency as with target agencies (although the quality of source agencies is also important). Target referral agencies -- places to which the firesetters are

to be sent for special services -- should be screened carefully for quality. If they are government operated (e.g., a community mental health center) there is less concern about quality, since these organizations typically have to meet standards that are carefully developed and regularly monitored. Private social service and mental health organizations (which are increasing in number) and individual practitioners should be carefully screened before sending them referrals. Practitioners should be certified and/or licensed in their respective fields -- social worker, psychologist, etc. If the organizations have referral relationships with other programs or institutions in the area, you can call them and ask for their opinion of the quality of services.

You should also examine the particular capabilities and capacities of the target referral agencies -- are they equipped to handle the cases you may be sending them?

Contacting Referral Agencies

The source and target agencies should first be contacted by telephone and mail to present the basic idea to them. The emphasis should be placed on the special needs of the firesetter population and the mutual benefits of a referral arrangement for the program, the agency, the firesetter and his/her family, and the community at large. Face-to-face meetings should then be arranged to discuss the desired referral arrangement. The central purpose of these meetings is twofold: (1) To convince the agency of the importance of a referral arrangement; and (2) to communicate the nature of the referral relationship. For source referrals, it is important to provide detailed guidance on the characteristics of the youths to be sent to the program and the circumstances under which they are to be referred. For target agencies, it is important to describe the types of youth that will sent to them and the services they are likely to need.

Some juvenile firesetter programs have gone to extreme lengths to convince agencies to send referrals to the program. In Rochester, the program told agencies that if they did not agree to send referrals to the program, "the next death caused by a juvenile firesetter would be on their conscience." Although this tactic is not appropriate for all circumstances,

programs should adopt a programmatic approach, doing whatever works (within ethical boundaries). Another approach is to make use of the personal and political connections that the program has with influential officials at the agencies. For example, the Fire Chief can be very influential in securing the cooperation of other public safety officials. Once the program has gained a toehold in the mental health or educational community, supportive members of those communities can be helpful in recruiting other individuals and agencies into the referral network.

Developing Detailed Referral Agreements

After the agencies have agreed in principle to the referral arrangement and the details of the arrangement have been discussed, a written agreement should then be drawn up that specifies clearly the nature of the relationship and the specific responsibilities of each party. These agreements need not be elaborate legalistic documents; in most situations a single-page agreement will suffice. In some instances, initial agreements may be unwritten, oral agreements, but written statements of understanding should be developed at some point.

At some point in the discussions, the liability issue should be discussed in some detail with the agency. Written waivers of liability may be appropriate in certain cases. If in doubt about the proper course of action with respect to liability, you may want to consult a knowledgeable attorney.

The referral agreements will vary according to the particular agency and the nature of the relationship. In some cases the agency may agree simply to provide the names of the youths and pertinent information on their case; e.g., a juvenile court handling a older multiple offender. With major institutions like the school system, the agreement may include a description of the types of youths to be referred, along with a plan for disseminating information about the referral arrangement throughout the system. Indeed, an important part of the development of agreements with large, complex institutions like the schools and the criminal justice system will be a careful examination of the flow of

juvenile firesetters through the system -- how and by whom they are identified -- in order to insure that the organization itself can identify and refer nearly all juvenile firesetters.

The establishment of a referral agreement is only the beginning of a referral relationship between the program and the agency. The arrangement will be effective only so long as it is cultivated and maintained through continuing contact with agency officials. In particular, it is important to provide timely and informative feedback to the source referral agencies about the status of youths referred to the program -- results of screening, intervention outcomes, referrals out to other agencies, etc. Periodic meetings with the representatives of all agencies who are part of the juvenile firesetter referral network will also help to maintain the relationships, and will also provide a vehicle for addressing any problems before they become serious. Cases conferences are one possible strategy for maintaining communication and strengthening the referral network.

Some juvenile firesetter program have parents sign waivers allowing the referral agencies (both referral source and target referral agencies) to share information with the juvenile firesetter program. These waivers or releases (see Volume II for examples) permit the juvenile firesetter program to inform the referral source that the youth was assessed by the program staff and allows the program to forward the results of their assessment to a treatment agency. In addition these releases allow target agencies, such as mental health facilities and child protective services, to apprise the juvenile firesetter program of the status of a case. This exchange of information will enable program staff to monitor each case and ensure that referral linkages are successfully accomplished and no youth falls between the cracks. Problems have developed in some jurisdictions when youth are referred to the juvenile firesetter program and the referral source is never informed about the outcome of the case.

Differences across Types of Jurisdictions

As with virtually any facet of the juvenile firesetter program, the nature and extent of referral mechanisms will be dependent upon the characteristics of the community in

which it operates. Key characteristics influencing the referral mechanisms include: (a) The nature and severity of the juvenile arson problem. (b) the size of the jurisdiction, and (c) the availability of relevant resources.

The central factor in this regard is probably the size of the jurisdiction, which may range from small towns in rural areas to major metropolitan areas. The discussion above is most relevant to the medium-to-large cities where most of the juvenile firesetting is concentrated. In small, rural towns the problem of juvenile firesetting is likely to be less severe than in the larger cities -- both the incidence of firesetting and the seriousness of the youth's problem -- so a huge network of complex referral networks will probably be neither needed nor available. The major types of referrals as shown in Figure 4.1 are applicable to small towns as well, although the sheer number of agencies and individuals will be considerably fewer than in the larger cities. Consequently, the work of developing and maintaining the referral network is likely to be less difficult and time-consuming. On the other hand, many of the target agencies where the youths are sent for special services may be located in other towns and cities. Identifying these agencies and working out practical referral arrangements with them may require considerable time and effort tracing down the best and most appropriate resources. With respect to the counseling and therapy resources, the program may consider identifying one or two individual therapists (rather than entire agencies) who could provide most of the services.

Component 5

Publicity and Outreach

Publicity and Outreach

Purpose

The Publicity and Outreach component will describe how juvenile firesetter programs can develop a public information and education campaign to raise the public awareness about juvenile firesetting and the juvenile firesetter program. Surprisingly, many communities are often unaware of the juvenile firesetter problem or misinformed about the characteristics of firesetters. Parents may be reluctant to obtain help for their children suspected of firesetting for fear that they will be "put away." What many parents do not realize is that the majority of fires set by children are set out of curiosity. Without proper identification and education, however, simple curiosity can have deadly consequences.

The juvenile firesetter program has a responsibility to the community to inform them that a program exists to help juvenile firesetters. It is important for the community to understand that juvenile firesetter programs are designed to provide education for young firesetters and identify and refer troubled firesetters to counseling if necessary. Many juvenile firesetter programs are hindered because the community is unaware of the services they provide. This component will outline strategies that can be used to inform and educate the public about the program and the services it provides.

A note of caution -- juvenile firesetter programs must be fully prepared to handle the requests for information and referrals generated from a publicity campaign. Programs must take care not to publicize anything they are not prepared to provide. The juvenile firesetter program will lose credibility quickly if the program staff say they can provide prompt assessment and education to firesetters and then place juveniles on waiting lists because they do not have adequate staff.

Strategies

Pamphlets, brochures, and posters. At a minimum, juvenile firesetter programs should develop a simple brochure to describe the program and provide parents and other members of the community with a telephone number to call for additional information. Examples of juvenile firesetter brochures can be found in Volume II. For brochures, pamphlets, and posters, the old adage "less is more" applies. The materials should be simple, with one or two major messages. These materials should briefly highlight the juvenile firesetter program's services and provide a contact for individuals to call. The juvenile firesetter program staff should consider soliciting funds, services (e.g., printing), or in-kind contributions from local businesses to defray the cost of design, production, and mailing. The coordinating council described in the Program Management component may help the juvenile firesetter program with fund-raising for these types of public relations activities.

The brochures can be distributed through the schools, local Parent/Teacher Associations, pre-schools, day-care centers, and pediatricians' offices. Stores may allow the brochure or poster to be displayed in a store window or cashier's desk. Brochures or pamphlets should also be sent to all community organizations, service organizations, hospitals, physicians, and government agencies work with juveniles.

Newspaper, TV, and radio exposure. The most effective way to publicize a juvenile firesetter program is through local news media exposure. For example, Columbus, Ohio's juvenile firesetter program was suffering because the public was unaware of its existence. With the help of the local television news media and newspapers, the fire department was able inform the public about the problem of juvenile firesetting and the services offered by the program. Program staff gave interviews about the local juvenile firesetter problem and explained how the community could use the Columbus Juvenile Firesetter Program.

The juvenile firesetter program staff cannot wait for the media to come to them. They must go to local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. If the juvenile

firesetter program wants to use the local media, the program coordinator or spokesperson will have to call or meet with news reporters, assignment editors, and local news show producers. It is the spokesperson's job to "sell" the story to local media, explaining the importance of getting information about the juvenile firesetter program to the community. The spokesperson needs to have a clear understanding of the message the program wants to convey to the public and be able to convey that message to the local media.

The spokesperson should have three or four key pieces of information to convey. Examples may include messages such as, 1) the majority of firesetters are curious children who need education, 2) the key to providing services to firesetters, whether curious or troubled, is identification and assessment, 3) children playing with fire is a very real and dangerous problem, 4) parents should not be afraid to seek assistance if they suspect that their children are playing with fire, or 5) the juvenile firesetter program is designed to provide assessment, education and referral for firesetters. Local communities may have messages that apply to their specific jurisdiction. A second key requirement is knowing the target audience. A message targeting parents may be different than a message targeting community agencies. The issue of target audience will be discuss further in the section on Public Service Announcements.

Juvenile firesetter programs should consider writing brief fact sheets and press releases which can be made available to the local media. Fact sheets can be used to give the media background information about the juvenile firesetter program. Fact sheets are usually brief and can be updated as necessary. A press release is a brief (one page) announcement of a newsworthy story or event. The release gives the important information about the event to the media. Every release should have the name, address and telephone number of the juvenile firesetter program. Examples of fact sheets and press releases can be found in Volume II.

An excellent resource on how to work with the media was written and published by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC). The book, Ink and Airtime, provides ideas and step-by-step guidelines on how to write press releases, fact sheets and articles.

The book also tells readers how to get their information on radio and television and how to systematically develop a media campaign.

Juvenile firesetter programs can also benefit from the information in media kits developed by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The USFA's "Curious Kids Set Fires" and the NFPA's "Big Fires Start Small" are described in the Intervention Services component. Both media kits contain information on the nature and extent of juvenile firesetting which can be used to educate communities about the problem of juvenile firesetting.

One way to get media attention is when a juvenile firesetting incident has occurred. Parental interest and media awareness are heightened after such an event. A description of the program and its services can be use as a sidebar to the story about the incident. In addition, if the juvenile firesetter program staff have identified themselves to the media, they may be interviewed and asked to give an expert opinion about juvenile firesetting. This is again an excellent opportunity to discuss the juvenile firesetter program (see Volume II for examples of articles). The important thing to remember is that no juvenile firesetting incident should be reported in the media without also mentioning the juvenile firesetter program.

In addition to newspapers, radio, and television, juvenile firesetter programs can also use community newsletters or magazines, newsletters of major corporations, and university and college newspapers to publicize the program. The program staff can write short articles about the juvenile firesetter problem and the steps the program has taken to alleviate the problem (Volume II contains an example of a short feature article). Program staff can then meet with the editors of the newsletters and magazines to discuss the articles. These types of publications are designed to serve the community and highlight community programs and activities and can be an excellent way to educate the community about the juvenile firesetter program.

Public Service Announcements. Public service announcements (PSAs) can also be used to inform the community about the juvenile firesetter program. They have the potential to reach a wide audience. PSAs provide information about a problem or program without trying to sell a product. One of the greatest advantages of PSAs is that the radio and television time are donated by the media. Competition for media time and space, however, is very tough and stations are cutting back on the amount of airtime they are willing to devote to PSAs. PSAs must, therefore, be well thought out and creative.

Several fire departments and the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) have developed "generic" or open-format PSAs. These are PSAs that describe the problem of juvenile firesetting in general, but allow the local program to "customize" the PSA by leaving space at the end for information about how to contact the local juvenile firesetter program. The PSA developed by the NFPA entitled, "Got a light, keep it out of sight," can be ordered through local NFPA representatives. The Phoenix Fire Department also has an open-format PSA developed by Fire-Pal. The Phoenix Fire Department has made the PSA available to local juvenile firesetter programs for a reproduction fee.

Juvenile firesetter programs may want to develop their own PSAs. Before developing a PSA, the juvenile firesetter program staff must decide who they want to reach -- their target audience -- and the best way to reach them. Two of the largest, relatively untapped, sources of referrals are parents and school personnel. PSA should be designed to capture the attention and support of these two groups.

The juvenile firesetter program staff will need to decide on the content of their message. PSAs are usually short, 15-30 second ads that focus on a specific message. The content of the PSA message will vary according to a number of different criteria, including target audience (parents, children, teachers, etc.), nature of the juvenile firesetting problem in the community, and the goal of the PSA (education, referral to the program, etc.). Some PSAs, targeted toward parents, describe misconceptions about juvenile firesetters. One such misconception is that they are "bad" kids or that they have deep-rooted psychological problems. Although some juvenile firesetters are troubled and need

counseling, the majority are young children who need fire safety education. Other PSAs are used to inform the public that juvenile firesetting is a real and deadly problem that, in many cases, can be avoided. Still others may address kids and warn them about the dangers of playing with matches and lighters. Regardless of the message, the PSA should give the audience a specific name and phone number to contact for more information.

Unfortunately, although the media donates PSA time and space, developing a PSA is not a low cost venture. Programs with limited funds will need to look to the community for funds or services. Companies may be able to donate paper, tapes, personnel, video equipment or other valuable materials in lieu of money. Programs unfamiliar with producing audio and video tapes may want to consider using PSAs which have already been developed. The vehicle used to promote the juvenile firesetter program (radio or television) will depend largely on the amount of resources available.

If the resources and expertise are available, the juvenile firesetter program will still have to compete with other agencies for the media time and space. Program personnel should address this problem directly by going to local newspapers and radio and television stations and meeting with the public service staff. The juvenile firesetter program director or another staff member will need to explain the severity of the problem and the importance of eliciting community support for the juvenile firesetter program. Ink and Airtime advises program staff to go to these meetings armed with all of the information available, including local and national statistics, evidence of program success, and endorsements from prominent members of the community.

Speakers bureaus, hot lines, and other services. The juvenile firesetter program or the coordinating council can establish other services to promote the program. For example, juvenile firesetter programs in Columbus, Ohio and San Jose, California have established speakers bureaus. These bureaus are comprised of individuals who have expertise in one or more areas of fire safety and prevention. These individuals volunteer their time to speak to community groups, schools, service organizations, and other interested groups. The

speakers can provide valuable information and promote the use of the juvenile firesetter program.

The Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Task Force, Inc. in Columbus, Ohio also maintains a Juvenile Firesetter Care Line where parents can receive information and help for their children. Volunteers from the community can be trained to man the hot-line and assist parents.

Partnerships

The nature and extent of the juvenile firesetter program publicity and outreach campaign will be limited to the resources available to the program. Programs with limited money and manpower have formed partnerships with community organizations and local businesses to acquire the necessary services, materials, and funds. The community can offer an unlimited wealth of resources. Corporations may donate money or sponsor specific promotional activities or products. As noted in the Program Structure component, the juvenile firesetter program staff should appeal to a corporation's sense of civic mindedness and self-interest when attempting to solicit donations from corporations. Contributing money to better the community is basically good business. The juvenile firesetter program coordinator should also request assistance from individual community members. Individuals with expertise in writing, advertising, audio and visual communications, design, and other skills can be asked to donate their skills. The problem of juvenile firesetting in a community problem that cannot be alleviated without the assistance of the community.

Resource List

Ink and Airtime:

National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)
1700 K. Street, N.W., Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006

Public Service Announcements:

Fire Pal
c/o Phoenix Fire Department
520 West Van Buren
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

National Fire Protection Association
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

Media Kits

"Curious Kids Set Fires"

U.S. Fire Administration
National Fire Academy
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727

"Big Fires Start Small"

National Fire Protection Association
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

information above plus follow-up data on firesetting recidivism and other problems such as delinquency, school or family problems, etc. The evaluation system is an extension of the MIS, rather than a separate system. Much of the data in such an evaluation system may come from the program's routine follow-up contacts with families of firesetters and the referral agencies to which they are referred. It provides the basic data needed for self-evaluation and program monitoring, as well as those needed for an independent evaluation of the program. Some juvenile firesetter programs, such as Houston's, have routinized systems for tracking recidivism and judging the effectiveness of program efforts, and will be used to illustrate the purposes and use of an evaluation system.

The third type of monitoring system suggested for juvenile firesetter programs is an incidence reporting system. The purpose of an incidence reporting system is to record basic information on all known juvenile firesetting incidents, whether or not the firesetter is identified and handled by the juvenile firesetter program. This system would provide the basic data needed to monitor jurisdiction-wide rates of juvenile arson and firesetting and gauge the effectiveness of education and outreach efforts of the program. The incidence reporting system would be an extension of the routine records kept by fire service officials, and ideally, would include firesetting incidents that have not come to the attention of law enforcement and fire officials.

Central Elements of the Monitoring Systems

The case information and other data to be kept in each of the proposed three systems are described in this section. The development, form, and use of the systems -- data collection issues, whether systems should be manual or computerized, which agency should maintain the system, analysis and reporting, etc. -- are described in the following section, "System Development and Use".

Management Information System. The data to be included in the Management Information System are drawn from the individual case files, primarily from intake,

screening, and assessment instruments, and from other program records (perhaps newly created for this purpose). There are four categories of data included in an MIS:

I. Case characteristics

   a. Source of referral

   b. Age, sex, race, family status of firesetter

   c. Details of the firesetting incident--motive, presence of others, location of fire, materials used, damage estimate, injuries, deaths

   d. Past firesetting incidents

   e. Initial assessment after screening (e.g., little, definite, or extreme risk)

II. Services rendered

   dates, content, and length of educational sessions; dates, purposes, and agencies of referral(s); number and type of counseling sessions; details of other services (mentor pairing, restitution, community service, visits to burn units, etc.)

III. Case disposition

   a. Dates and outcomes of all services rendered, gathered through routine reporting by all cooperating agencies or direct follow-up

   b. Status of case in criminal justice system

IV. Program Activities

   a. Education/prevention activities, school-based or community or other -- type, number, attendance, content

   b. Training for others in the field -- type, curriculum, number trained

   c. Resource/materials development

   d. Other -- media coverage, Task Force participation, etc.

The first three categories, case characteristics, services rendered, and case disposition information, are the most important elements of the Management Information System. The data will be as accurate and complete as the individual case files and other program records. Each case should have a case file which would contain intake forms, screening

instruments, and disposition information in each case file. Several examples of forms used by exemplary programs can be found in Volume II (Upper Arlington forms, A.1; Columbus, A-2; Fort Worth, A-3; and Charlotte, A.4). Screening instruments are reviewed and presented in Component 4.

Evaluation system. Data for an evaluation system requires follow-up activities with police, fire, prosecution, courts, and probation agencies; schools; parents; social service agencies; and private treatment facilities. Data collection procedures are discussed in the following section; the following information on all cases handled is to be included in the evaluation system:

- Firesetting recidivism -- information on any further firesetting incidents.
- Delinquency -- any and all acts of vandalism, stealing, etc.
- School problems -- truancy, chronic tardiness, disciplinary problems, academic and behavioral problems, etc.
- Family/home problems -- running away, lack of parental control, etc.
- Personal and interpersonal problems -- emotional and behavioral problems, poor peer relationships, etc.

Incidence reporting system. Like the evaluation system, the incidence reporting system requires information from a variety of sources, although the fire department is clearly the primary source. The incidence reporting system should cover the jurisdiction of the juvenile firesetter program -- e.g., a city, county, etc. It will include all known or suspected juvenile firesetting incidents, whether or not they are reported to the authorities (data collection is discussed in the following section). The system would include information on:

- Firesetting incidents -- date, location, ignition materials used, items/structures ignited, damage estimate, injuries, death, reported or not, reasons for not reporting if known.
- Known or suspected firesetters -- age, sex, motive, presence of others, past incidents.

System Development and Use

Management information and evaluation systems. The development and use of the management information and evaluation systems will be covered here under one heading. The evaluation system should be considered simply an extension of the MIS because the data collection, computerization, and other issues are quite similar. The fire department is best equipped to build and maintain these systems, and in most instances is the home of the juvenile firesetter program. Programs outside the formal law enforcement system (which may include those housed in the fire service) may have problems obtaining data due to confidentiality concerns and may not have sufficient expertise or equipment, especially if the system is computerized. In Houston, however, where the juvenile firesetter program is outside the law enforcement system, confidentiality appears to pose no problems for data collection and information sharing. Contractual agreements between the agencies involved spell out the services required.

Cooperation and coordination from all agencies is needed to build and maintain a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system. The responsibility of each agency in regard to reporting requirements and providing data should be spelled out in interagency agreements. For a developing program, monitoring issues should be identified from the start and built into discussions among involved agencies from the inception of program planning. These issues include confidentiality, policies or regulations that prohibit sharing information, routinized data collection procedures, and resistance to participating in data collection because of time constraints or lack of resources.

Each agency may have confidentiality concerns, at minimum, or statutory regulations that limit the individual information they may share with others. Schools, in particular, will be very concerned about releasing any information on students. Law enforcement agencies, particularly probation and the courts, are severely limited in the extent to which any information on juveniles can be provided to outsiders, and in some jurisdictions, the fire and police departments are considered outsiders. While these concerns may be mitigated if the monitoring system is maintained by fire officials within the juvenile firesetter program,

confidentiality protections should be reviewed and safeguarded. Access to records should be controlled whether the system is manual or computerized, and only grouped results should be reported outside of the program.

Each agency involved in the juvenile firesetter program must make a commitment to inform the program about particular events concerning youth in the program. The data collection effort should not be burdensome; simple reporting forms can be developed to facilitate case tracking and disposition (see Volume II for examples). In Houston, for example, counseling agencies submit monthly reports on clients referred to them by the juvenile firesetter program (see B.1) and Child Protective Services reports quarterly on the number of family sessions held and progress made. When a family terminates counseling, the entire case file kept by the counselor is returned to the juvenile firesetter program. In Portland, the program follows up with both the parents and the referral agencies within a month or two after referral to confirm that the recommended contact has occurred.

The management information and evaluation system may be kept manually, but since personal computers have become increasingly prevalent in the workplace, computerization is advised. A manual system may suit a small program perfectly, if its caseload is not large and its reporting requirements are small. Simple logs, carefully organized and kept up to date, will provide a small program with basic information very quickly. Computerization is needed when either the caseload is too large to handle summary computations easily and accurately or when reporting requirements are frequent and/or detailed, making interim computations and status reports cumbersome to produce. When a program reaches somewhere between 75 and 100 cases per year, computerization is probably warranted.

If operating on a manual system, key information from case files should be placed on monthly activity logs that enable summaries to be easily calculated. For example, the sample log on the following page will tell you at a glance the number of cases handled in July, their referral sources, and initial intervention steps. With minor calculations, the average age and other information about the firesetter and firesetting incident can be summarized. A program developing a manual MIS should decide what information is to

be kept on logs, after reviewing their management and reporting needs. Perhaps two logs will be needed, one to describe basic case information (dates, referral sources, individual and incident characteristics) and one to record referral, intervention, and disposition data. A log should be used as a "tickler system", enabling program staff to quickly view the status of a case and monitor it for the delivery of intervention services. The log used by the Portland program (see Volume II) can be used to monitor cases, noting when referrals were made and when follow-up is needed.

In a computerized system, information from case records would be entered directly into a computer using a database management program (e.g., dBase). Simple queries on a case by case basis can be made through the database program, such as the date of referral to the program, and many database programs enable more complex queries to be made easily, such as the number of cases referred to the Community Mental Health Center. Tables, summary statistics, and routine reports can be produced by programming through the database program. Statistical packages such as Systat or SPSS are probably not needed for monitoring purposes, although their statistical capabilities may be helpful in producing specific information needed by a juvenile firesetter program.

One advantage of a computerized system is that it provides a basic database from which information can be drawn, sliced anyway the program desires. For example, manually kept logs can provide a program with a running total of the years' caseload. But if new questions or needs arise -- to look at referral sources during a given quarter or investigate whether kids 13 or over have caused more serious fires than those under 13, for example -- the hand tallies can become burdensome and inaccurate. Such information would be at your fingertips in a computerized system. To maintain an MIS capable of providing a full picture of juvenile firesetting in a given jurisdiction, computerization is needed. A computerized database can contain much more information than a manual system (the results of screening tests and details of the firesetting incident, for example) and therefore answer much more complex questions (such as do second-time firesetters do better with inpatient or outpatient treatment). Without a computerized system, these questions require the hand-culling of individual case files. On the other hand, computerized systems take care

and feeding; data must be entered on a timely basis and one must know how to get information out of it without expending substantial time in training or programming.

A generic computer system could be developed by a central agency (such as the U.S. Fire Administration/FEMA) at relatively low cost and tailored to each program as needed. Alternatively, a juvenile firesetter program might hire local experts (or find volunteers among local computerniks) to develop a computer program. We feel most juvenile firesetter programs will have the in-house expertise needed to enter data and operate the system on an ongoing basis. It should not be a time-consuming job; rather only an hour or two a week should keep the system current.

The analysis produced via the computerized system or summarized manually in regard to the management information system should enable a program to answer questions such as the following:

1. How many cases have been handled this year relative to last year?
2. What are the individual and family characteristics of the juveniles handled?
3. What are the characteristics of the fires set by the juveniles handled by the program?
4. Which referral agencies are used the most?
5. How long, on the average, are juveniles and families in treatment?

To extend the MIS to become an evaluation system, follow-up activities must take place with a number of key agencies to determine the long-term effectiveness of the intervention strategies in terms of recidivism. For evaluation purposes, a program needs to know, minimally, of any recurrence of firesetting behavior, and should want to know about juvenile delinquency, continued problems at school or home, etc. Quarterly contacts should be made with the family and key agencies for a year or two after the precipitating incident to inquire about recidivism and related problems. In the Houston program, cross-reference checks are made among participating agencies to look for recidivists and the

program director makes monthly phone calls to the family for a year to check on the juvenile's progress. Other programs have formally conducted surveys of families to explore recidivism issues and what the family felt about the juvenile firesetter program and the referral services that may have been offered. Follow-up forms used by the Portland (D.1), Upper Arlington, (D.2), and Columbus (D.3) programs are can be found in Volume II.

The key agencies include the police and fire departments, courts and probation, schools, parents, social service agencies, and public treatment facilities. The follow-up may consist of routine reporting as done in Houston or periodic phone calls to determine if the agency has had any further contact with the juvenile and, if so, for what reasons. Parents are probably the best single source of follow-up information, if sufficient rapport has been built to enable the parents to report any additional delinquent behaviors or other problems. Telephone contact should be made with the parents rather than sending an impersonal form.

These recidivism data should be added to the computerized database or manual logs as they are gathered. Together with the MIS data, this information forms the basis for a comprehensive evaluation. The information is obviously valuable to the program, to assess its own effectiveness and effectiveness of participating agencies. An independent evaluator will want to verify the information and collect more detailed information on treatments and outcomes, but the MIS will provide the basic building blocks for an outside evaluation. Finally, the MIS data are easily available when preparing annual reports, proposals, news releases, etc.

Incidence reporting system. Incidence reporting systems, as discussed previously, are valuable for analyzing the full problem of juvenile firesetting and determining where services are needed and where services (education, particularly) have been effective. Since fire departments will have the basic systems in place needed to maintain an incidence reporting system, the real challenge is in data collection. In too many jurisdictions, there is no means to identify fires set by juveniles among all fires set.

A juvenile firesetting incidence reporting system should contain fire and individual information as previously presented. The data should be gathered via existing records or new forms developed for this purpose, from all fire departments covering jurisdictions of interest depending on the areas served by the juvenile firesetter program. The Portland, Oregon, program is building a statewide database on juvenile firesetters. The form used by participating fire departments can be found in Volume II. Portland has also conducted a risk analysis of the city to identify high-risk areas for juvenile firesetters and implement education/intervention strategies as appropriate. The state of New York, in conjunction with the Rochester program, is also developing a statewide computer system.

In addition to gathering and analyzing reported juvenile firesetting incidents, methods to assess the incidence of unreported fires are needed. Several options are available. One way is to identify and survey organizational entities (primarily schools and parents organizations) that record firesetting incidents that are small and not reported to the fire department.

Another, more basic assessment of the juvenile firesetting problem is to survey youth directly to gather information on their firesetting behavior. Juvenile firesetting is substantially underreported, and many youth set fires that never come to the attention of parents or authorities. Anonymous surveys of students in the schools (as conducted by the Rochester program) are probably the best single source of information on juvenile firesetting incidents as well as fireplay activities that do not result in actual fires. Strict anonymity must be upheld for truthful self-reports to result. This type of survey will provide information on the full extent of the juvenile firesetting problem in a jurisdiction and is as valuable as reported fire statistics.

Because of the volume of data and need for summary statistics, the incidence reporting system should be computerized. In many departments, the creation of this system will be relatively easy. Fire incidence reports that are routinely computerized may be sorted to reflect just the juvenile problem.

Summary

This component describes three types of monitoring systems: management information systems, evaluation systems, and incident reporting systems. Monitoring systems, such as the Management Information Systems (MIS) described in this component enable the juvenile firesetter program to track individual cases and determine the status of a case to ensure that needed services have been provided. In addition such systems provide a means for summarizing caseloads, which can be used in annual report, evaluations, and funding agencies. Monitoring systems do not have to be elaborate computerized systems to provide the program with the information it needs. Simple manual system can enable programs to carefully monitor their cases. Evaluation systems are extensions of the MIS and include information on firesetting recidivism and other problems such as delinquency, school and family problems, etc. This information can be used for program self-evaluation and monitoring to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile firesetter program. Incident reporting systems allow jurisdictions to accurately record information on all juvenile firesetting incidents regardless of whether they are referred to the juvenile firesetter program.

All juvenile firesetter programs, regardless of size, should have some system for monitoring their cases. As the component notes, monitoring systems can provide valuable information about case status and can assist programs assess the effectiveness of their services.

Component 6

Monitoring Systems

The purpose, content, format, and use of systems for monitoring juvenile firesetters and firesetting incidents are covered in this component. While many juvenile firesetter programs have developed some internal system to monitor their caseloads, others simply maintain individual case files with no systematic way to track cases, determine final dispositions, report to funding agencies, etc. Very few have systems capable of being used for evaluation purposes. As described in this component, simple monitoring systems are recommended for all juvenile firesetting programs regardless of size. They need not be elaborate, expensive, semi-comprehensible computerized systems; both manual and simplified computer systems can be perfectly adequate for careful monitoring.

Purpose

Monitoring systems serve different purposes, depending on the information they contain and the uses to which they are put. At the most elemental level, a management information system is needed for case tracking, caseload analysis, and reporting of program operations and results. A Management Information System (MIS) should include case characteristics of the firesetter and the firesetting incident, services rendered, dates of key events, and the final disposition of the case. It is used as a management tool to monitor individual cases, determining the status of each case at any given point and ensuring that needed treatment has been completed. An MIS provides the means for summarizing and analyzing the program's caseload (the number of cases handled, case type, firesetter characteristics, number and type of services rendered, etc.), tracking and reporting the number and type of program activities (presentations given, etc.), and providing data for annual reports, evaluations, and funding agencies. Most juvenile firesetter programs maintain some version of an MIS, or at least have the basic ingredients (such as case records) for the making of one.

Extending the MIS to include recidivism and other follow-up data provides the basic building blocks for an evaluation system. An evaluation system would contain all of the

Component 7

Developing Relationships with the Justice System

Developing Relationships with the Justice System

The juvenile firesetter program needs to develop relationships with all of the key agencies that work with juvenile firesetters. As noted in the Referral Mechanisms component, these agencies include police, social services, schools, mental health, and the juvenile justice system. It is the relationship with the juvenile justice system which will be the focus of this component. Too often juvenile firesetters are referred to the juvenile justice system and never come to the attention of the juvenile firesetter program. Juvenile firesetter programs need to be aware of all incidents of firesetting so that no juvenile firesetter falls through the cracks. The juvenile firesetter program is in a unique position of being able to assess all firesetters and track them through referral agencies. In addition the juvenile firesetter program can be a resource for probation, juvenile court, and correctional facilities. The juvenile firesetter program's potential as a resource to the juvenile justice system, however, is based on strength of relationship between the program and the justice agencies.

Purpose

The purpose of this component is to provide information to assist programs in developing effective relationships between the juvenile firesetter program and the justice system. Specific objectives of this component are the following:

- to help the juvenile firesetter program identify and treat the delinquent firesetter;
- to develop working relationships between the juvenile firesetter program and specific agencies of the criminal justice system including probation, family court, prosecutor's office, and juvenile court; and
- to help the juvenile firesetter program better assist delinquent firesetters in residential correctional facilities.

Model approaches that have been used in three cities - Rochester, NY, Charlotte, NC, and Portland, OR - are summarized below and detailed descriptions of these approaches can be found at the end of this component. Recognizing that each program will differ in such areas as state law, program structure and manpower, programs should review these models and consider the procedures most appropriate to their particular program and jurisdiction.

- Rochester, New York

All fires set by juveniles are investigated by fire investigators assigned to the Fire Related Youth (FRY) Program. Investigators approach every case of juvenile firesetting as a criminal investigation. After collecting information about the case, the investigators meet with the youth and provide fire safety education. In Rochester, all juvenile firesetters come to the attention of the FRY program prior to being referred to other agencies, including juvenile justice. Cases may be referred to prosecution as a last resort to get services to children in need or when the child has engaged in numerous other delinquent activities. The FRY investigators work very closely with the Probation Office and the Presentment Agency. The Probation Intake Unit will handle the case first. Intake Unit staff will decide whether the case can be "adjusted" without going to court or whether the case will be referred for prosecution. If adjustment is being considered, the probation department will consider the youth's risks and strength. Probation staff may refer the juvenile to a mental health or social service facility. Cases referred to prosecution are petitioned through the Presentment Agency to Family Court. The presentment attorneys work very closely with the FRY investigators and rarely lose a case sent to prosecution. Before a case gets to court, the judge assumes that every effort has been made to keep the youth out of court. If the judge finds that there is enough evidence to justify the charge, s/he will ask Probation to conduct a family evaluation and make a recommendation to the court. Often the judge will also consider the FRY investigator's recommendation.

- Charlotte, North Carolina

All arson or suspicious fires are investigated by the Arson Task Force. If a a juvenile is suspected, the Task Force members often try to persuade the youth to confess to setting the fires. How the case proceeds often depends on whether the juvenile confesses. If the juvenile does not confess, the case is referred to the District Attorney's Office for prosecution. If the juvenile does confess, the Task Force has then decides whether to proceed with prosecution or refer the juvenile directly to the juvenile firesetter program which is the housed in another division of the fire service. The decision is based on a number of consideration including whether the incident is a first offense and whether the youth destoyed another's property. If the youth is referred to court, the case is referred to a Court Intake

Counselor. The intake officer will meet with the parents and the youth and decide whether the petition for prosecution is warranted. The intake officer can recommend a deferred sentence under the condition that the youth participate in the juvenile firesetter program. If the case goes to court, the youth is interviewed by a court counselor who makes a recommendation to the court. The court counselor can also recommend that the youth participate in the juvenile firesetter program. If such a recommendation is accepted by the court, it then becomes a court order. The judge may also court order the youth to other agencies or facilities.

- Portland, Oregon

In Portland, Oregon, all juvenile firesetters are reported to and, in investigated by, the Portland Fire Bureau. In 1986, the Fire Bureau developed a program to reduce the incidence of juvenile firesetting. Juveniles apprehended for fire related offenses may be referred directly to the juvenile firesetter program or they may be referred to the program via the juvenile justice system. Those referred the justice system are more likely to be the older juvenile who has been 1) involved in a more serious incident, 2) identified as a "troubled firesetter," or 3) identified as a repeat offender. If a youth is referred to juvenile court, the case is assigned to an intake probation officer. The intake officer will review all of the records and make a decision to close the case; divert the case to the juvenile firesetter program, social service agency, mental health professional, or another diversion program; or refer the case to the District Attorney's Office. If the district attorney choosed to prosecute the case, a petition of charges is filed with the juvenile court. At this point the case is assigned to an adjudication officer, who prepares the case summary and recommendations. If the judge finds that a crime was committed, s/he must decide whether to sentence the juvenile to a correctional facility, mental health facility, or place the juvenile on probation. As a condition of probation, the juvenile may be court ordered to attend fire safety education through the juvenile firesetter program, or participate in mental health counseling.

Relationships with the Probation Department

Within the justice system, a representative of the probation department (intake unit) is usually the first person to encounter the juvenile firesetter. Therefore, the juvenile firesetter program must inform and educate the probation department, especially those assigned to the intake unit, about the program. For example, a representative from the juvenile firesetter program should make an in-service education presentation to the staff of the probation department.

The staff of the probation department should receive periodic updates, fact sheets, newsletters or yearly updates as to the status of the juvenile firesetter program. Prepared by the juvenile firesetter program staff, these communications can contain statistics, case studies, intervention techniques, list of placement facilities, referral methods, etc. The updates are designed to keep the probation department abreast of what the juvenile firesetter program is doing.

The juvenile firesetter program should plan and coordinate a procedure by which the probation department refers all juvenile firesetters to the program for an evaluation if such an evaluation. This process will ensure that all juveniles are identified and evaluated and offered educational intervention, if appropriate. One way to plan and coordinate such a procedure which has been used is some jurisdictions would be for the probation department to assign a particular probation officer (most likely in the intake unit) to handle all cases involving juvenile firesetters. That intake officer would be able to work closely with the juvenile firesetter program staff.

In addition, a representative from the juvenile firesetter program routinely should be present at all conferences concerning the treatment and/or placement of a juvenile firesetter. Input from the juvenile firesetter program will be invaluable in discussions with child protection agencies, mental health agencies, correctional facilities, and representatives from community placements.

Relationship with the Law Enforcement, Legal and Judicial Community

The members of the law enforcement, legal (prosecutive and defense), and the judicial community must be aware of, and educated about, the juvenile firesetter program. Certainly, the juvenile firesetter program can be an invaluable referral source for the district attorney's office, trial lawyers, and juvenile judges.

Effective methods of informing and educating the members of these professional communities include supplying them with brochures explaining the program, conducting in-

service education seminars, and sending fact sheers, periodic newsletters, and annual reports about the activities of the program. These methods will not only inform and educate, but will also continue to enhance the professional image of the juvenile firesetter program. Such an image is imperative if the professional community is to utilize the services of the juvenile firesetter program.

Relationships with the Juvenile Correctional Institutions

Some juvenile firesetters will be placed in juvenile correctional institutions for rehabilitation. The juvenile firesetter program can also educate the various correctional institutions about the existence and the contents of the program. Similar relations should be fostered with the correctional institutions as with the probation department.

For example, the juvenile firesetter program should be aware that a juvenile firesetter is being held at a particular correctional institution. Also, the juvenile firesetter program, once it is aware that a juvenile firesetter is to be admitted to a correctional institution, should inform the institution that the program has evaluated and/or treated the juvenile. A dual waiver, which is signed by the juvenile firesetter's parent or guardian, would allow the juvenile firesetter program to share information they may have about the juvenile with the correctional facility and allow the facility to share information with the program.

The juvenile firesetter program should provide periodic in-service education programs to appropriate staff of the correctional facilities, many of whom are likely to hold inaccurate perceptions of the juvenile firesetter. For example, the overwhelming majority of correctional facilities, as well as community placements such as halfway houses, believe that the juvenile firesetter is a highly dangerous individual. They perceive the juvenile firesetter as one who is always on the verge of acting out and starting a fire. In actuality, the juvenile firesetter is less likely to act out by starting a fire once he/she is placed in a structured environment and away from the psychological and sociological factors that helped produce the original firesetting behaviors.

The juvenile firesetter program should maintain an open line of communication with the correctional facilities. Correctional facilities rarely maintain specific treatment programs for juvenile firesetters. One such program, which is described in detail in the Intervention Services component, is operated by the Upper Arlington, Ohio Juvenile Firesetter Program. The Upper Arlington program offers a 12 week educational program to juveniles incarcerated for arson. Juvenile firesetter programs should encourage and participate in the development of similar programs for juveniles. If a structured program is not possible within the correctional facility, then juvenile firesetter programs should make its staff readily available to the staff of the correctional facility to establish individual treatment plans for specific cases.

Summary

Overall, a coordinated link between the juvenile firesetter program and the justice system is imperative. The juvenile firesetter program can be an important asset to the Probation Department, District Attorney's Office, Juvenile Court, and Department of Corrections. Unfortunately, many juveniles "slip through the cracks." In many cases the juvenile firesetter program is unaware when a juvenile has be diverted to juvenile justice and the justice system is often unaware that a juvenile firesetter program exists in their jurisdiction. The juvenile firesetter program can play a vital role in ensuring that all juvenile firesetters are identified and evaluated and can be a vital source of educational services and information to the juvenile justice system.

Appendix A: Program Models

Rochester, New York

Charlotte, North Carolina

Portland Oregon

JUVENILE FIRESETTERS AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Rochester, New York
Fire Related Youth (FRY) Program

FRY investigators approach every case of juvenile firesetting as a criminal investigation. There are two reasons investigators choose to refer cases for prosecution: 1) as a last resort to get services for children who need them and 2) when the child is simply a juvenile delinquent involved in a number of anti-social activities. The first group of juveniles includes children whose parents refuse to voluntarily comply with a FRY referral and those who cannot afford treatment. Court ordered treatment is paid for by the County. Twenty-seven juveniles were arrested in 1988 (one juvenile was charged with fourteen counts). The average age of the juveniles was 13.5 years old.

When a juvenile is arrested for arson, the case is referred to the Probation Intake Unit. In rare cases, a child is arrested, taken into custody and given a remand hearing within 24 hours. If the judge orders the child to remain in custody, the case is tried within ten days without referral to the Probation Intake Unit. This scenario occurs only with very delinquent juveniles. The Intake Unit assesses all cases before they go to court. Intake Unit staff must decide whether the case can be "adjusted" without going to court or whether the case will be referred to the prosecutor's office. Cases will automatically be referred for prosecution if: 1) the victim insists, 2) restitution is too high to be handled at intake, 3) the juvenile claims innocence, or 4) the intake services are not appropriate. If the Intake Unit is not considering adjustment, the case must be filed in court within seven days.

If adjustment is being considered, the probation department has up to four months to prosecute or drop a case. Intake staff consider the youth's risk to the community, the strengths of the youth and the family, and the youth's delinquency history. The probation department may refer the juvenile to the Urban League Program, Convalescent or Hillside Hospital, Children's Hospital, and other agencies or private psychiatrists. If the family is complying with the Intake Unit's referral, the case is marked "closed, adjusted." If problems develop or the family fails to follow-through with the referral, the case is marked "closed, referred to petition" and the case is filed in family court.

Cases referred for prosecution are petitioned through the Presentment Agency to Family Court. Family Court has jurisdiction over juveniles ages 7-16. Juveniles 13 years of age and older may be tried in adult criminal court for Class A Felonies (murder, rape, arson I or II, etc.) Juveniles must be tried within three days for a misdemeanor or ten days for a felony, if they are in the

detention center. There are exceptions to this rule. The juvenile's attorney can get an adjournment for up to thirty days if requested. In addition, either attorney may get a short (e.g. one week) adjournment if absolutely necessary. If the juvenile is at home, the case is usually tried within six weeks. The presentment attorney commented that they have lost only one case since 1983 (even though arson is one of the hardest cases to prove) and have the lowest declination rate in the state because of the FRY investigators' thorough investigations. According to the Director of the FRY program, most of the juveniles plead guilty to a lesser offense. The FRY investigators will not allow a juvenile charged with a felony to plead to anything less than a felony unless there is no other way to get services for the juvenile. There are four categories of felony arson (Arson I - Arson IV). They will also allow the juvenile to plead down from one misdemeanor to a lesser misdemeanor (e.g. reckless endangerment to criminal mischief).

The presentment attorney commented that the juveniles referred for prosecution seem to fall into two categories, ages 7-11 and ages 13-15. The younger juveniles are interested in seeing the fire. These youth tend to be victims of abuse and/or neglect and their motivations tend to be emotional or psychological. Older juveniles are interested in damaging things. They are mad -- at the school, their parents, a neighbor -- and want to strike back. In other cases, these youth simply set fires because they want a thrill.

Before a case gets to court, the judge assumes that every effort has been made to keep the youth out of court. A juvenile case proceeds like any non-jury trial. There is a fact finding period leading up to the trial that includes the FRY investigation and a Probation report. If the judge finds that there is enough evidence to justify the arson charge, s/he will ask the Probation Department to conduct an evaluation of the family. That evaluation is conducted by the Probation Investigation Unit. Probation officers in that unit interview the family and collect information through a home visit. The Probation Department then gives their recommendations to the judge. The purpose of the Family Court is to provide services or treatment to juveniles and/or their families.

The judge may order the following:

1. Probation for up to two years. In this case the judge will take into consideration the FRY program's recommendations and may order the child or family to obtain additional services as a condition of probation.

2. Placement for up to one year (misdemeanor).

3. Placement for up to eighteen months (felony).

In cases of placement, the New York State Division of Youth usually suggests a facility. Facilities may include foster homes, youth camps, unsecured residential placement facilities, limited secure facilities, and maximum secure or locked facilities. According to Judge Affronti, the majority of the FRY referrals, with the exception of first-time offenders, are residential placement material. Placing these youths is still very difficult because of their firesetting background.

The court does not monitor the cases after the judicial decision. The only time the court hears about a case is when the residential facility formally asks the court to rule on a change, extension, or termination of placement. The court is usually not informed when a youth is released from a facility.

Rochester, New York
Fire Related Youth

Decision to Prosecute

1. As a final attempt to get services for the youth
2. Delinquency

No → Referral to:
- Mental Health
- Dept. of Social Services

Yes ↓

Arrest

Rare cases: child arrested, placed in detention
Remand hearing within 24 hours
court hearing within 10 days

Probation Intake Unit

1. No "adjustment" considered when:
   - victim insists on prosecution
   - restitution too large
   - child claims innocence
   - intake services not appropriate

   Case filed within seven days

2. Adjustment/Prosecution assess:
   - risk to community
   - strength of child and family
   - child's delinquency history

Adjustment

. Referral to:

Urban League Program
Hillside or Convalescent Hospital
Other Agencies, private psychiatrists

. Monitor for four months

Presentment Agency/Family Court

. Misdemeanors prosecuted within 3 days, felonies within 10 days if youth is detained

. If youth is not detained, case is generally tried within 6 weeks

. Factfinding including:
FRY investigation
Probation report

. Most cases:
Youth pleads guilty to lesser offense

. Court may order:
Probation for up to 2 years, plus additional services

Placement for up to 1 year (misdemeanor)

Placement for up to 18 months (felony)

Charlotte, North Carolina
Juvenile Firesetter Program

When the fire department responds to a fire, the fire officer at the scene must determine the cause and origin of the fire. If he cannot determine the cause and origin or if the fire was "set", the officer calls the Arson Task Force. A fire investigator and police investigator from the Task Force investigate the fire scene and talk to the witnesses. The fire and police investigators are paired because the fire investigator has the experience in arson investigation but does not have the authority to arrest suspected arsonists.

If it appears that a juvenile was involved with the fire, the police investigator and/or fire investigator attempt to talk to the juvenile and his/her parents at the fire scene. The Arson Task Force members try to persuade the juvenile to confess to setting the fire. How the Task Force members proceed with the case often depends on whether the child confesses. If the child does not confess, the case is referred to the District Attorney's Office for prosecution. If the child confesses to setting the fire, many more options are open to the Task Force. In deciding whether to refer a case for prosecution, the Task Force also considers: 1) if it is a first offense and 2) if the child destroyed property owned by someone outside the family. If the fire was set in the house by a child playing with matches, the investigators will refer the child to the juvenile firesetter program. The investigators commented that they often do not prosecute cases in which the parents can resume responsibility for the damage caused by the fire (usually this means that the fire was set in their home). The investigators do not refer repeat offenders or youths who set the fire in a school or other structures located away from their home to the juvenile firesetter program. These cases are usually referred for prosecution. The investigators will not refer a case to the juvenile firesetter program if they are going to refer the case for prosecution.

The Task Force members make their decision to prosecute based on information obtained in their investigation of the firesetting incident. The juvenile firesetter program does not assess the juvenile prior to referral to prosecution. Task Force members are very familiar with the USFA assessment procedures and use them as a guideline when interviewing the juvenile. They do not, however, formally use the interview protocols.

On rare occasions, a case is referred for prosection by a uniformed police officer who is called to investigate a crime. This is not the accepted procedure -- all arsons (juvenile or adult) should be referred to the Task Force. Occasionally, however, mistakes are made.

Cases referred to Juvenile Court. In 1988 thirty-four of the 143 juvenile firesetters were referred for prosecution. A member of the Task Force commented that they tend to err on the side of

referral to prosecution and then let the District Attorney decide. The characteristics of these juveniles vary widely. They are between seven and seventeen years old and most are from lower SES families. Once a case is referred for prosecution, the police report is sent to one of five intake officers in the Juvenile Court Counselor Intake Unit. The intake officer has 15 days to accept or reject a petition for prosecution. The intake officer sends a letter to the parents indicating when and where they should meet with the intake officer. The intake officer interviews the parents and child to find out what happened and decide whether to prosecute. The court counselors and intake officers use a risk scale and a needs scale to help them predict whether the child will come to the attention of the court again and decide what services the child may need. If the juvenile scores below a four on the risk scale, the intake officer will usually recommend a 90-day deferred sentence and treatment or the juvenile firesetter program. Juveniles who score four or above on the risk assessment are looked at more closely.

If the family fails to appear or if the child denies the charges, the case will go to court. If the child admits to the charges, the intake officer can divert the child from court into a counseling program, if necessary, or to the Juvenile Firesetter Program. As noted earlier, fire investigators will not refer a case to the program if they are going to prosecute. However, that case may ultimately be referred to the program as an alternative to court or by the judge at the trial. The intake officer also considers whether 1) the juvenile has other problems (school, home, etc.), 2) the juvenile exhibits a lack of remorse, and 3) the victim insists on prosecution. The intake officer is likely to recommend prosecution if any of these considerations exist.

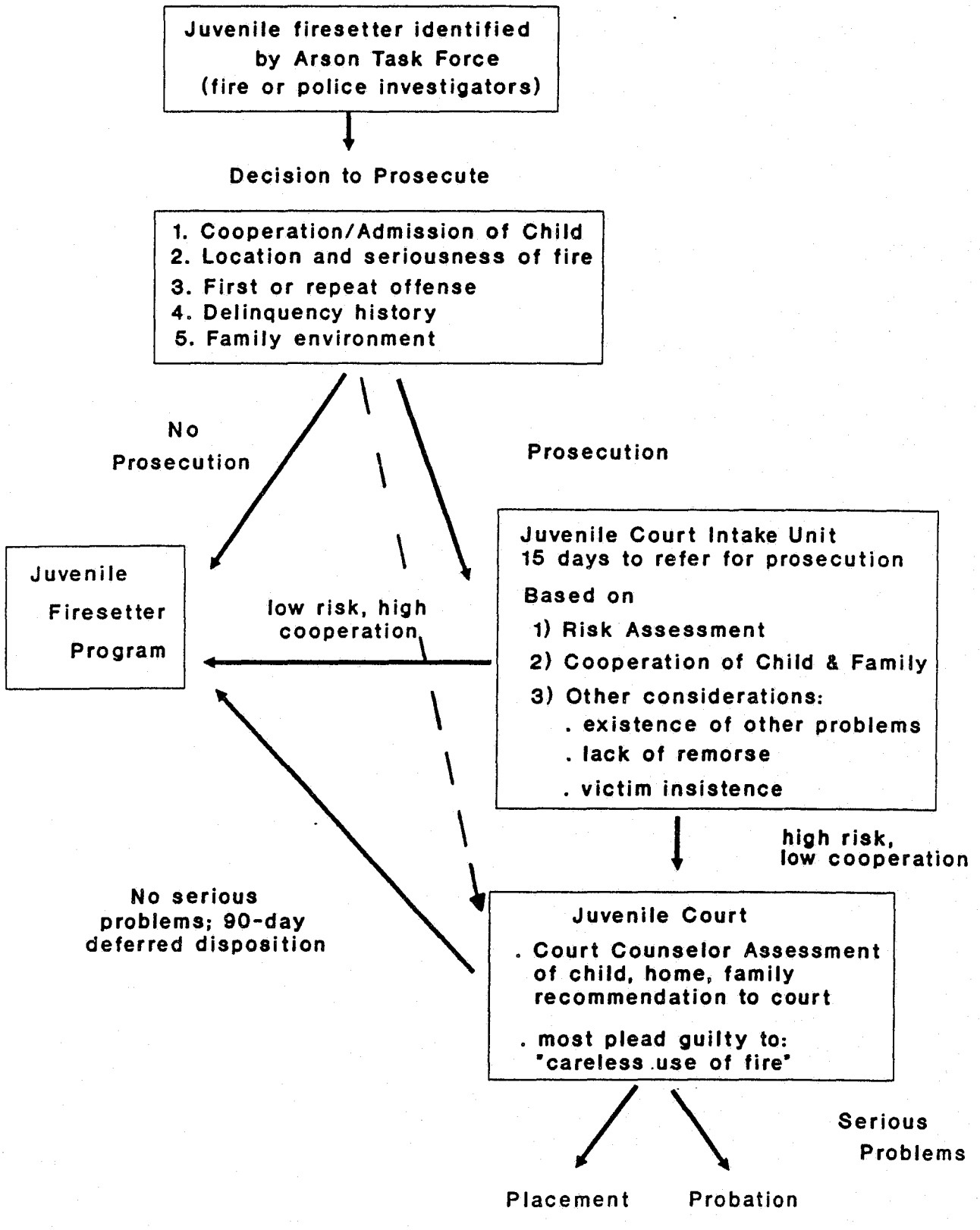
If the intake unit decides the case should not be prosecuted, the Arson Task Force has the right to appeal that decision to the District Attorney's Office. On rare occasions, a juvenile can appear in court without a referral to the Intake Unit. Such cases occur when a juvenile is arrested and detained between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. A hearing is set for the morning following the arrest.

There are many arson statutes regarding the type of structure or property burned and whether, in the case of a structure, the structure was occupied at the time of the fire. Many children are charged with a felony but agree (with the consent of the Arson Task Force) to plead guilty to "careless use of fire," a misdemeanor. The Court Counselor becomes involved with the case at the time of the trial. Prior to sentencing she meets with the family, conducts a home visit, and checks school records to write a behavioral and social history report. This is the third time the juvenile is assessed. As part of that report she makes recommendations to the judge about sentencing. Like the intake officer, she might recommend referral to the juvenile firesetter program, counseling, or other social services. The Court Counselor interviewed noted that she refers almost all of the juvenile firesetters she sees to the juvenile firesetter program.

The judge may also order a psychological or psychiatric evaluation. If there are no apparent problems the judge will order a 90-day deferred disposition and refer the child to the Juvenile Firesetter Program. If the child shows no further problems, the case is closed. Problems arise when the child needs more extensive services. According to the Court Counselor, finding placements for firesetters is very difficult because many group homes will not take them.

Aside from the Juvenile Firesetter Program, the Juvenile Court Judge has other disposition options available. Severely disturbed or violent children can be sent to the Specialized Youth Services (Willie M.) program. The program provides a variety of services in settings ranging from locked wards to group homes to individual apartments. The number of firesetters referred to the Willie M. program appears low. The judge can also put the youth on probation for up to 12 months with the option to renew the probation for an additional 12 months. If the youth does not engage in other crimes, probation can only be renewed once. If the youth is found guilty of subsequent criminal activity, the two-year cycle begins again. Probation usually requires that the child and/or family receive mental health counseling or that the child enter the community restitution (Kid's Repay) program. As a final resort, the judge can send the juvenile to a training school.

Charlotte, North Carolina



The Older Juvenile Firesetter In Portland, Oregon: An In-Depth Look At The Juvenile Justice System

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Senior Research Associate
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Introduction

Juvenile firesetting has been a steady and serious problem over the past decade. Juveniles are involved in 82% of all fires that are intentionally set. Nationally, juveniles playing with fire caused nearly 100,000 fires that resulted in about $200 million worth of damage, caused 4,000 injuries, and led to over 300 deaths, according to 1986 data reported to the FBI.

Juvenile justice systems differ so widely throughout the nation that it is difficult to discuss the handling of juvenile curiosity firesetters as well as those with felony arson or other criminal charges, such as reckless burning. According to Hammett (1984), most juvenile justice systems recognize four options in the prosecution of the adolescent firesetter:

- lecture and release by police or fire investigators;
- informal diversion through counseling, education, or other programs;
- prosecution in the juvenile system, with outcomes including counseling, supervised probation, restitution, and confinement in a youth facility; and,
- bindover for prosecution in adult court (usually reserved for the most serious offenses.)

The older juveniles, ages 14 to 18, are easily differentiated from the curiosity firesetter. These adolescent firesetters, many of whom become adult arsonists, are more likely to be involved in more serious firesetting incidents. In 1987, 40% of the arson arrests (6,139) made nationwide were of those older than 15 and under 18 years of age (FBI, 1988). In fact, the problem is much larger than the statistics indicate. Many adolescent firesetters are not arrested, and, therefore, do not show up in crime statistics. Even less are prosecuted or adjudicated as youths in local juvenile courts.

Consequently, this group presents a perplexing problem for juvenile firesetter programs, social service agencies, public and private treatment programs and facilities, and juvenile justice systems. The majority of juvenile firesetter programs are not set up to handle the adolescent firesetter who has been involved in the more serious firesetting incident. Most of the programs, in reality, work to educate the child curiosity firesetters and their parents in fire safety, and rarely deal with those over 14 years.

Social service agencies have limited resources at their disposal when an adolescent firesetter is referred. Seldom are foster care placements, residential treatment facilities, or youth services centers open to these adolescents as a result of their dangerous firesetting behavior. Also, few private or public inpatient treatment facilities want to risk accepting someone with such dangerous behavior. Even less have specifically designed programs for firesetters in this older age group. The correctional system really does not want the adolescent firesetters for the same reasons; and, in addition, the correctional facilities do not have rehabilitation/treatment programs for them.

In an attempt to understand the difficulties presented by older juvenile firesetters who have been involved with the more serious firesetting behaviors, the structure and functioning of the juvenile system in Portland, Oregon was studied - from first report of the incident, to arrest, through prosecution and intervention. (See Figure 1 for an illustration of the organizational structure and referral mechanisms.) Members of the Portland Fire Bureau, Portland Police Bureau, Childrens Services Division, District Attorney's Office, juvenile court and correctional system, and public and private treatment facilities were interviewed between May 1-4, 1989 concerning interface with, and disposition of, the older juvenile firesetter. In particular, the relationship between the older juvenile firesetter and the juvenile justice system was explored.

Portland Fire Bureau

Oregon State law assigns the responsibility of fire investigation to either fire departments or the State Fire Marshall. In Portland, all juvenile firesetters are reported to, and investigated by, the Portland Fire Bureau.

Fires are reported by parents, Portland Police Bureau, Portland School Police, as well as other community resources. At present, one police officer from the Portland Police Bureau is assigned to the Portland Fire Bureau to assist in fire investigations. Although the Portland Police Bureau and School Police are separate law enforcement agencies, they, in most cases, only assist fire investigators with investigations.

Portland fire investigators are certified as police officers by the police academy; thusly, the Portland Fire Bureau is its own law enforcement agency. There are presently no required standards for certification as a fire investigator. However, all fire investigators are at least Fire Investigator I.

Juvenile Firesetter Program

In January, 1986, The Portland Fire Bureau planned, organized, and developed a program to reduce the incidence of juvenile firesetting and the resulting loss of property and life. The specific mission was " to enhance an awareness and personal responsibility for fire and life safety, to reduce property loss, life loss and injury from fire caused by juveniles."

Figure 1. Organizational Structure and Referral Mechanisms

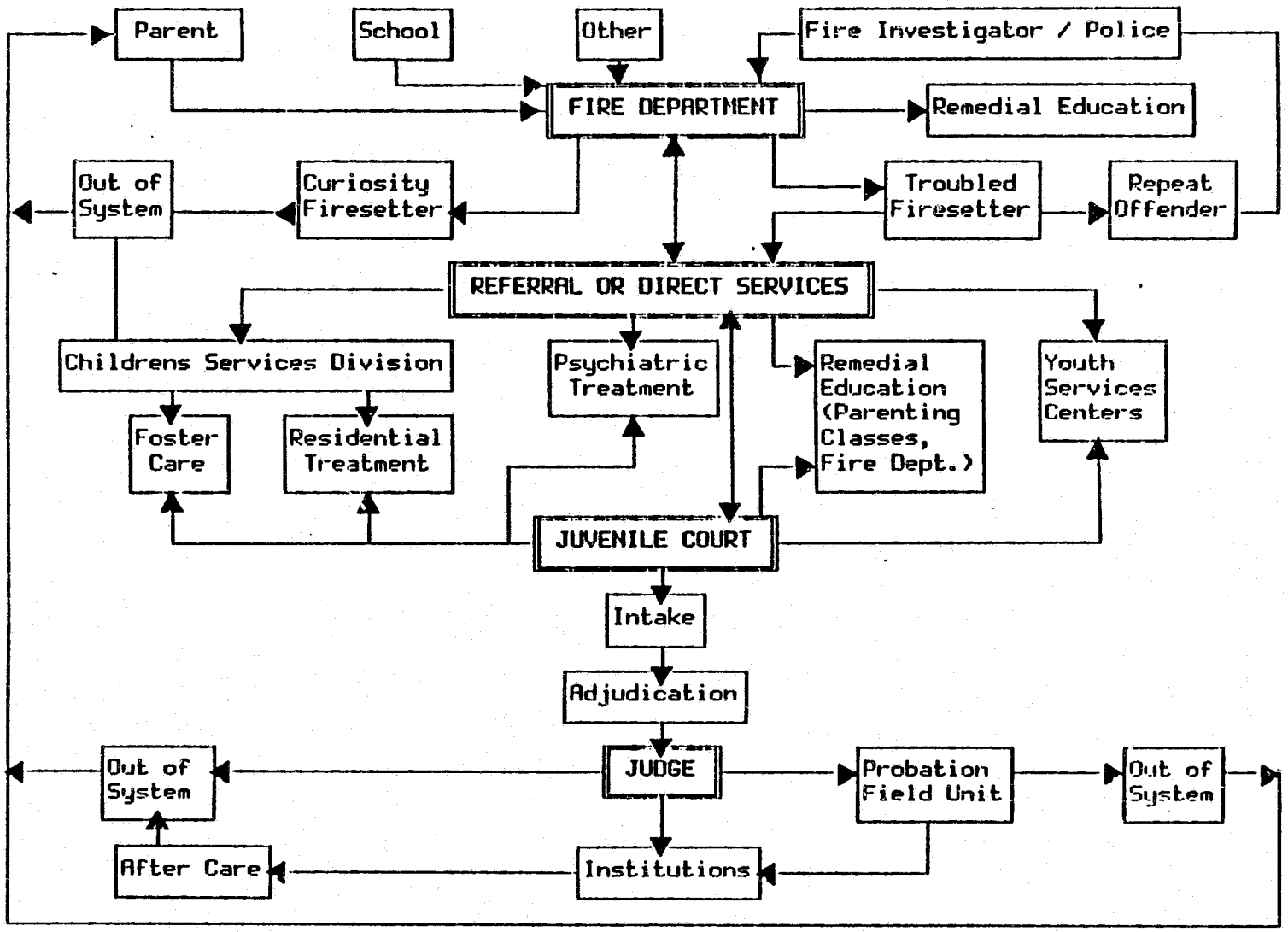


Figure 2 shows the number of referrals to the juvenile firesetter program from 1986-1988. During the first year of the program, 363 cases of juvenile firesetting were reported. Approximately 65% of these cases were referred by fire investigators. About 35% were referred to the program by parents requesting assistance for their child who had set a fire. In 1987, there were 433 referrals, and, in 1988, there were 308 referrals.

Figure 2. Referrals to the Juvenile Firesetter Program

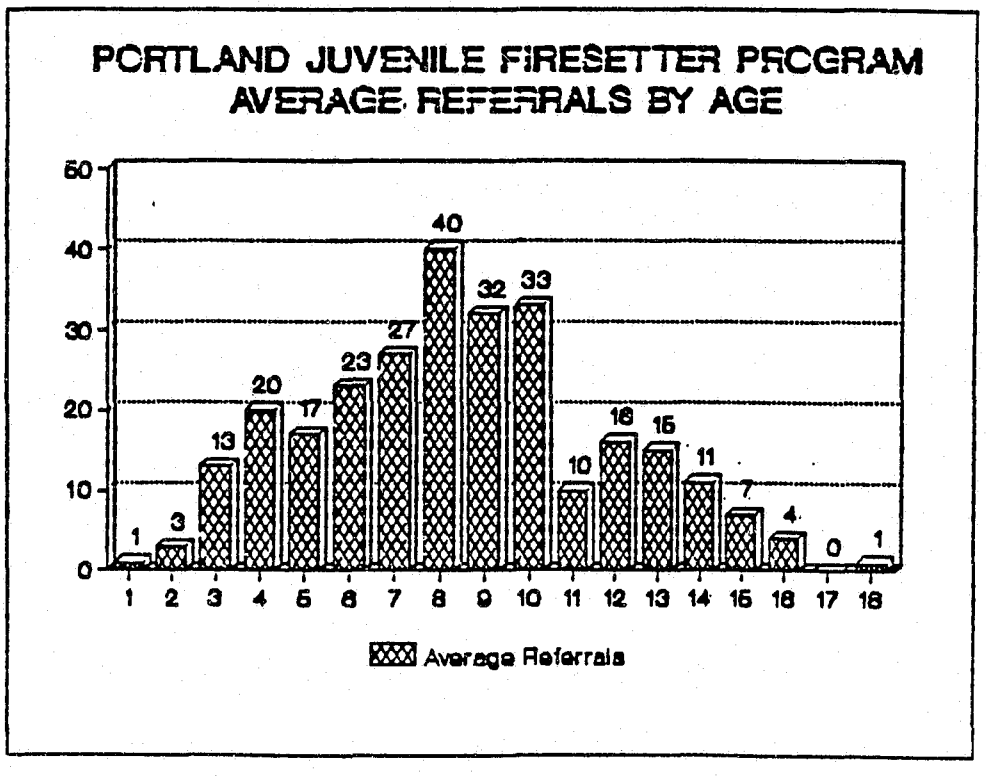
1986	1987	1988	TOTAL
363	433	308	1,104

In 1987, there were 292 fires reportedly set by juveniles, of which 239 were assigned for investigation. These investigations resulted in the apprehension of 134 juveniles for fire-related offenses. Fifty-nine were referred to the juvenile justice system for formal charges and 87 were referred to the juvenile firesetter program.

In 1988, there were 308 juvenile firesetters reported to the Portland Fire Bureau for Investigation. The only data available indicates that 38 cases were referred to the juvenile justice system.

Figure 3 shows the average number of referrals by age to the juvenile firesetter program. The data demonstrates that, on average, 23 of the 273 referrals to the program are older juveniles between 14 and 18 years old, which is approximately nine per cent.

Figure 3.



Once the juvenile firesetter is referred to the juvenile firesetter program, the juvenile is interviewed and evaluated using the standard FEMA interview procedure. On the basis of this evaluation procedure, the juvenile can then be referred for services, provided services by the program, or referred to the juvenile justice system. The juvenile can be referred to Childrens Services Division for foster care or residential treatment placement, inpatient or outpatient psychiatric treatment (public and private), youth services centers, or remedial education classes (i.e. parenting classes). The juvenile may also be referred for remedial education provided by the Portland Fire Bureau within the juvenile firesetter program. These referrals are, generally, for the curiosity firesetter.

Finally, the juvenile may be referred to the juvenile justice system. Those referred to the juvenile justice system are more likely to be the older juvenile who has been (1) involved in the more serious incident, (2) identified as a "troubled firesetter, or, (3) identified as a repeat offender.

Fire investigators use established criteria in order to determine if the juvenile should be referred to Childrens Services Division or to the juvenile justice system. These criteria are:

1. the criminal nature and intent of the act;

2. juvenile's "clear and present danger" to self and/or others;

3. type of fire, amount of damage, object of the fire;

4. family dynamics (i.e. willingness of parents to get help for juvenile, neglect by parents); and,

5. past history of firesetting and/or other anti-social behavior.

Juvenile Court (Multnomah County, Oregon)

After formal arrest by fire investigators, the juvenile firesetter is introduced into the juvenile court system. The same procedures are used with juveniles as with adults, including Miranda-type warning, presence of parents or attorney during interrogation, waiver of rights, suspect identification procedures, searches, etc.

The case is assigned to an intake probation officer, who is responsible for the continued protection of the community and continued accountability by the juvenile to the community. The intake officer reviews all police and fire department reports and also considers the juvenile's previous interaction with the juvenile justice system. (There is no one intake officer who is assigned juvenile firesetter cases.) At this point, the intake officer can make the decision to close the case, divert the case to a juvenile firesetter program, social service agency, mental health professional, another diversion program, or to refer the case to the district attorney's office for institution of formal charges.

The intake officer now makes a determination whether to release the juvenile to the parents or guardian, or to keep the juvenile in custody because the youth presents a "clear and present danger" to himself or others in the community (Arson I is one of five offenses that allow a juvenile to be detained). In attempting to make this sometimes difficult decision, the intake officer must weigh the protection of both the juvenile and the community by placing the "least restrictive measure" upon the juvenile. If the juvenile is retained, placement detained at the Donald E. Long Home, which is adjacent to the Juvenile Court Building.

After referral to the district attorney's office, the case is evaluated for its factual and legal merits. The Senior Deputy District Attorney stated that each case is evaluated on the basis of the amount and degree of "provable prosecutable" facts under the law. The determination is made by a review of all available information, including police and fire reports and circumstances/dangerousness of the incident. The victim's desire to prosecute is also taken into consideration. Less important factors that are considered are the juvenile's attitude, previous history and social issues (home, school, mental health issues). These latter factors are given more weight during plea-bargaining and/or disposition. The Senior Deputy District Attorney emphasized that "age is not a factor." Overall, a large percentage of cases referred are eventually charged "to the highest degree allowable by the law" and prosecuted.

In the State of Oregon, there are three possible charges: (1) Arson I (Class A Felony); (2) Arson II (Class C Felony; and, (3) Reckless burning (Class A misdemeanor). Juvenile Court proceedings based upon formal charges must take place in order to mandate treatment or any other type of intervention for the juvenile. The Juvenile Court of Multnomah County, which includes Portland, prosecuted 19 juveniles in 1987 and 21 in 1988 for firesetting acts. Older juveniles, and those involved in the more serious firesetting behaviors, are significantly more likely to be formally charged and prosecuted. The juvenile firesetter is seen as a serious, high risk offender.

If the facts of the case warrant, petition of charges are filed with the juvenile court. At this point, the case is now assigned to an adjudication officer, who begins to prepare the case summary, social history and recommendations for the pre-trial conference and formal hearing.

If the juvenile has been retained in custody, an immediate preliminary hearing is held, usually on the next judicial day, to determine if the juvenile should remain in custody until the pre-trial conference (hold/detain decision). On the other hand, if the juvenile is released, the juvenile is issued a citation to appear at the pre-trial conference. At this time, a lawyer will be appointed for the juvenile, if needed.

The pre-trial conference is usually held the next judicial day (maximum detention at the Donald E. Long Home is 3-4 days before the pre-trial conference). The pre-trial conference is attended by the juvenile, adjudication probation officer, parents or guardian, and deputy district attorney. At the conference, preliminary evidence is presented in order to establish whether there is a case against the juvenile. Also,

the adjudication officer and the prosecutor outline their suggestions in the case (probation, training school, etc.). Plea-bargaining can take place at this time. There is much less flexibility in plea-bargaining when the juvenile is charged with Arson I in comparison to Arson II charges; in fact, an older juvenile (age 15 and above) involved in the more serious incident can be prosecuted in adult court.

A formal hearing is then held, if disposition of the case is not made at the pre-trial conference. The evidence presented at the hearing must convince a juvenile judge "beyond a reasonable doubt" that a criminal act was committed by the juvenile. The hearing is not a criminal proceeding, since it takes place within the juvenile justice system. Approximately 70% plead guilty or no contest, 15% are found not guilty, and 15% are found guilty as a result of the hearing. If found guilty, the juvenile does not have a criminal record.

If the judge finds that a crime was committed, then a decision must be made as to which method of punishment and/or restitution should be invoked. Before making a determination, the judge will usually consider the social history and recommendations prepared by the adjudication officer and the deputy district attorney, particularly focusing on such factors as school performance, family situation and dynamics, and previous interaction with the juvenile justice system.

The case is now transferred to a field probation officer, who is responsible for the continued protection of the community, continued accountability of the juvenile to the community, and skill development for the juvenile. The field probation officer completes an offense-specific outline, consisting of 20 offense factors. As a result of this outline, a case management program is developed for the juvenile, specifically to address the juvenile's skill deficits. The improvement and/or elimination of the skill deficits become the focus of the field probation officer's work with, and supervision of, the juvenile.

The juvenile may be placed on probation, which usually involves return to the custody of the parents or guardian. As part of the probation, the juvenile may have to pay restitution for damages, attend fire safety education through the juvenile firesetter program, and/or become involved with counseling through a Youth Services Center or other public or private program. Even if placed on probation, the juvenile can be referred to Childrens Services Division, as a ward of the Court, for placement into a group home or foster care. Finally, as a ward of the Court, the juvenile can be placed in a State correctional facility (until age 21), the State psychiatric hospital (until age 21), or a private psychiatric hospital.

Childrens Services Division is an important resource for foster care and group home funding and placement. Rapid Access Screening meetings with representatives from the Juvenile Court and the Childrens Services Division are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays to evaluate juveniles for group home and Job Corp. placement. Group home and foster care placements are very difficult, if not impossible, to arrange for the juvenile firesetter, especially the older juvenile involved in the more serious incidents.

There are two State training facilities for juveniles; the MacLaren facility in Woodburne, Oregon is for boys, and Hillcrest facility in Salem, Oregon is for girls. The juvenile is placed in the general population. Neither facility has a specific treatment program for the juvenile firesetter. It was stated that neither facility want juvenile firesetters admitted. The State psychiatric facility excludes those who are physically dangerous to themselves or others. Firesetting is specifically mentioned in the exclusion statement, although juvenile firesetters have been admitted to the facility (see Eligibility Criteria in Appendix).

Cedar Hills Hospital, a private psychiatric hospital in Portland, has established an inpatient treatment program for juvenile firesetters. Approximately 80% of the referrals are from fire investigators, some from the schools, and others from families, juvenile court and mental health facilities. However, the program only accepts juvenile firesetters from 6-13 years of age (there has been one 3 year old in the program). The Hospital does, in fact, have a comprehensive, behavior modification-oriented program. Upon admission, the juvenile is restricted to the unit. A firesetter journal is kept, which answers questions about the firesetting behaviors. The juvenile receives a nickel for matches and quarter for lighters that are found and turned in to staff (matches and lighters are "planted" on the unit by staff). Family therapy and identification of firesetting behavior patterns are stressed. The usual hospitalization is 28 days.

A unique treatment aspect of the program was developed by the consulting psychologist. The juvenile is required to spend sessions with a member of the treatment staff and the parents, during which time the juvenile must repeatedly set and extinguish fires in a ritualistic behavioral pattern. If the pattern is not followed exactly, then the juvenile must begin over again. The parents are at the sessions in order to teach them how to extinguish the firesetting behaviors at home.

The Juvenile Court has instituted the use of a structured approach with juveniles involved in the justice system. The Balanced Approach was devised by Maloney, Romig and Armstrong (1988) especially for use in juvenile probation systems. The key element of the approach involves offense-specific case management, consisting of community protection, accountability and competency/skill development. Figure 4 illustrates, and briefly describes, the approach.

The Appendices include forms used in the various steps described in this report, as well as other general information.

Figure 4. THE BALANCED APPROACH TO JUVENILE JUSTICE

A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH GUIDED BY THESE VALUES:

I. Community Protection: The public has a right to a safe and secure community.

II. Accountability: Whenever an offense occurs, an obligation by the juvenile offender incurs.

III. Competency: Juvenile offenders who come within the jurisdiction of the court should leave the system more capable of living productively and responsibly in the community.

IV. Individualization: Each juvenile offender has a unique set of circumstances and factors which have contributed to his or her offense behavior. The response by the system to the juvenile should be individualized and be related to an assessment of the unique contributing factors.

V. How to Implement the Above Principles: Balance: Justice is best served when the community, the victim, and the youth receive balanced attention and all gain tangible outcomes from their interaction with juvenile probation.