

FIRE F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

# Guide

For Partner Agencies

[www.firefriends.org](http://www.firefriends.org)

2011

# Welcome to the Fire F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Partner Agency Guide.

## Overview

Fire FRIENDS (Firesetter Regional Intervention, Education, Network & Delivery System) is a multi-agency, community intervention program for children that display firesetting behavior. Fire FRIENDS offers fire safety education to juveniles and their families to address the dangers of fire setting behavior, the potential consequences of firesetting and the many potential victims who are placed at risk by juvenile firesetting.

A juvenile can be referred to the Fire FRIENDS Program, either through their local fire department, law enforcement, juvenile probation, schools or their family. This guide offers information and directions to guide you through the process of entering and tracking a juvenile in the Fire F.R.I.E.N.D.S. database.

There are three sections to this guide:

- Enrollment Procedures
- Intervention Services
- Sample Letters

The enrollment procedure begins on the following page and contains links to all the documents used for enrollment. The enrollment procedure pages will inform you on what documents are required, which are optional, and once you have completed the enrollment, how to track a juvenile in the database and enter your comments such as when the juvenile has completed the one hour class.

Depending upon the child's firesetting history, intent behind the behavior, and the severity of the outcome, (results of the Initial Fire Evaluation Survey), the Fire F.R.I.E.N.D.S. database will suggest the class level and/or need for behavioral health for the firesetter. Detailed information on the intervention services process and the intervention levels are included in this section. The scoring criteria for the Initial Fire Evaluation Survey is included as the last page of this section. If you would prefer that the juvenile you are referring receive a different level of intervention, it is extremely important to notify the Program Coordinator.

Section three includes sample letters that are sent by Fire FRIENDS to the parent/guardian notifying them of the intervention level. The letters have information about the one-hour class, six-hour class enrollment procedures and class instructions and behavioral health contact. Your Agency will need to send a letter for the one hour class, since each agency is responsible for conducting their own one hour class.

If you have any questions, please call Trish Sysak, Fire FRIENDS Program Coordinator at 714-573-6725. We look forward to working with you towards the goal of abating juvenile firesetting.

## How to Enroll a Child into the Fire FRIENDS Program

### STEP ONE -FILLING OUT THE FORMS

Several documents must be filled out to enroll a child in the Program. The documents can be found on the website [www.firefriends.org](http://www.firefriends.org) . Once you have accessed the **Home** page, point to the **Resources & Information** tab on the menu bar. Click on **For Fire Agencies and JFS Programs**, then **Forms**.

The screen that appears will have instructions for filling out each of the forms. [Form E-1, Enrollment Information](#) gives written instructions on how to fill out **all** of the Fire FRIENDS forms or you can access the video instructions next to each document.

There are three documents that must be completed to enroll a child in the Fire FRIENDS Program. If a parent/guardian refuses to complete any of the three forms, then the child will not be enrolled and may not attend any of the classes. The interviewer should fill out the information on these three forms, except where signatures are required. Form [E-2 Authorization for Release Form](#), [E-3 Enrollment Form](#) and [E-4 Initial Fire Evaluation Survey](#) are the three mandatory forms. A blank copy of form E-2 should be given to the parent.

Form [E-5, Pediatric Symptom Checklist](#), is an important document, especially when discerning if a child should be referred to Behavioral Health. The Pediatric Symptom Checklist should be handed to the parents/guardian to fill out, then returned to you and submitted as part of the package. This form, however, is not mandatory to be enrolled in the program.

Form [E-6, Optional Field Determination](#), is where the interviewer has the chance to document any information they feel is important, such as family dynamics, attitude, etc. The interviewer can also request the method of intervention on this document. The submittal of this document is not necessary, but welcomed.

## STEP TWO-ENROLLMENT

Now that the forms have been completed, the information can be entered into the Fire FRIENDS database. If you are a member agency who has a current signed agreement between your agency and the Fire FRIENDS Program, then you may proceed to log in to the database with the user name and password provided by the Fire FRIENDS Program.



Member Agency  
Log In  
(for agencies currently  
using the regional  
database)  
username:  
  
password:  
  
Submit

Once the enrollment has been completed, you can review the documents you just entered – this is also the only time you can view the child’s identification number, which you will need later on to reference any follow-up information. Click on “view application” to reveal the number.

[Thank you for your response.](#)

[View Application](#)

If you are not a member agency then you will not be able to enter the Fire FRIENDS information into the database. Instead, you can submit the Fire FRIENDS paperwork to a member agency representative or directly to the Fire FRIENDS Program Coordinator and they will enter the enrollment information.

## FOLLOW-UP

Member Agencies - Once the data (child's information) has been entered into the database, and the Fire FRIENDS program coordinator receives an electronic notification of your entry, you will receive a phone call/E-mail from the coordinator confirming the entry. The coordinator will also give feedback on what level of intervention has been recommended for the child/children.

**If a higher level of intervention is needed according to your agency, you need to confirm that at this time so the program coordinator is aware of this requirement.**

Once entered in the database, the child's information can only be accessed by the identification number assigned to the juvenile. This means, when you log in to the Fire FRIENDS database to obtain or enter information regarding the child, you can only access their "account" by entering their number into the search field.

**Enroll A Child into Fire F.R.I.E.N.D.S.**

**Update/Track a child**

[Enrollments](#) | [Attendance](#) | [Cancellations](#) | [Comments](#)

The Fire FRIENDS Program Coordinator will issue a letter to the parent/guardian stating the level of intervention the child needs to complete. A notation will be entered under the child's identification number in the database stating that a letter has been sent and the level of intervention needed. If the child attends the six-hour intervention class or behavioral health, the notations will be entered by the program coordinator. It is up to the Member Agency staff to enter information regarding the one-hour class information such as completion date.

To add a new comment, enter information in the "New Comment" box, then click "Add".

**Tracking for child: 1756**

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Forms	Date Entered
Fire Friends Enrollment	1/29/2009
Individual Education Attendance	
Group Intervention Enrollment	
Group Intervention Attendance	

Enroll Child:
<a href="#">Group Intervention</a>

Child's Attendance:
<a href="#">Individual Education</a> <a href="#">Group Intervention</a> <a href="#">Behavioral Health Assessment</a> <a href="#">Firesetting Reinforcement Summary</a>

Comments:
Please do not mention any private details that can be linked to the child's identity.
<b>Comments:</b> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>
<b>New Comment:</b> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div>
<input type="button" value="Add"/>

Non-member Agencies – Once you have submitted the Fire FRIENDS forms to a member agency/program coordinator, you will not be able to access information via the child’s identification number on the website because you will not have access to the database. Once the child has completed the intervention class, the child will receive a certificate as proof that the intervention has been completed.

NOTE: The Fire FRIENDS website is available to the general public. The database is only available to Member Agencies.

## **Intervention Services**

Fire FRIENDS offers three different intervention services to juvenile firesetters and their families; a one hour safety education course, a six hour intensive education class, and behavioral health evaluations.

It is generally ideal for the fire department or referring agency, to screen, interview, and enroll the child in the program. A fire investigator or other personnel from the interviewing agency may have the advantage of a face-to-face interview, firsthand accounts of the firesetting incident, and the ability to observe both parent and child and family dynamics. Face-to-face interviews may also lend more information than what is being asked on the forms. Please access the "Field Determination of Intervention" form (E-6) when needed. This form is the place to voice any concerns the interviewer may have regarding the intervention level of the juvenile. Input from this form can alter the original level of referral for intervention services. The parent/s may also request a level of intervention based on the juvenile's needs.

After the child is enrolled in Fire FRIENDS, the program coordinator will make a referral based on the juvenile's score on the "Initial Fire Evaluation Survey" and the "Pediatric Symptom Checklist" if it has been filled out. The "Field Determination of Intervention" form will also be taken into account at this time. The parent(s)/guardian will be contacted by letter regarding the level of referral and other general information. A sample of the letter send to the parent(s)/guardian has been attached.

The Fire FRIENDS Program does not mandate individuals to attend the program. Referring agencies are responsible for setting mandates and establishing the time frame required to complete the class.

## **Class Information**

### ***One Hour Class***

The one hour level of intervention would be for the children who are low-risk or too young for the intensive, six-hour, education class. The one hour fire safety education class is conducted by an educator at the enrollee's local fire department. The juvenile must attend the class with a parent or legal guardian. The educator designated to instruct the one hour class is responsible for scheduling a class time with the family.

Information for one hour class instructors can be found on the Fire FRIENDS website. From the home page, go to the Resources & Information menu and click on "For Fire Agencies and JFS Programs", then "Educational Resources". The one hour fire safety education class information is listed under "Individual Curriculum Lesson Plans and Materials for Instructors" and is divided into three basic categories determined by the firesetter's grade level. Once you click into the appropriate grade

level you will have the information needed to conduct the one hour class. Fire FRIENDS utilizes two different DVDs to help with class instruction. K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade firesetters will watch “Be Cool about Fire Safety”, while the other two grade categories watch “In Their Own Words”, which features actual juvenile firesetters that tell their stories including the results and consequences of their actions. The one hour class involves a homework assignment that will be turned in on a future date, determined by the class instructor and student.

Preparing for the one hour class is extremely important so that you will be familiar with the material. It is also helpful to attend another educator’s one hour class to witness how the class is instructed. Establishing a rapport with the child is an important factor when instructing any of the classes.

### ***Six Hour Group Intervention Class***

The six hour intensive education class is held on a Saturday, from 8 o’clock until 2 o’clock, once a month. This class covers information on fire safety, behavioral health, consequences and the juvenile justice system, and is more in-depth than the one hour education. It is important that the program participants learn the consequences of their actions, take responsibility of their actions, and learn fire safety and burn prevention. This class is ideal for most children over eight who seem likely to start a fire again. Children must attend with a parent, even if they are 18. It is important that parents learn about juvenile firesetting as well. The class helps parents learn how to deal with firesetting behavior, why a child may play with fire, and how to be fire safe.

The Six Hour Group Intervention Class has two instructors that have gone through specific training. Contact Fire FRIENDS at 714-573-6725 to find out when the next instructor training class will be held.

### ***Behavioral Health Evaluation***

Because juvenile firesetting may be an underlying cause of a bigger problem, behavioral health evaluations are an integral part of intervention. Fire FRIENDS’ Behavioral health evaluations are conducted by Chapman University. Children are referred for an evaluation for several different reasons; if the child is too young to attend class but is at serious risk to start another fire, if a child scores high on the Pediatric Symptom Checklist, if the firesetting event seems to warrant more intervention than a class, and/or if they are referred for these services by the fire agency or probation, or requested by a parent. The Fire FRIENDS program coordinator refers the children to Chapman University and Chapman schedules an appointment with the family. If an emergent child is enrolled, Fire FRIENDS tries to contact the family within 24 hours to arrange services as soon as possible.

# Initial Fire Evaluation Survey

## Scoring Criteria Form

Childress, C.A. Fineman, K.R., Patterson, B.L. (2004)

Simple	Complex	Emergent
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Score as the highest level of concern rated.

### Degree of Involvement

1. What was the juvenile's **degree of involvement** with the current fire incident (mark one)?
- This juvenile actively set the fire and was alone
  - This juvenile actively set the fire as part of a group involved with the fire
  - This juvenile did not actively set the fire, but was part of a group involved with the fire
  - This juvenile's degree of involvement is unknown, questionable, or in dispute

### Frequency

2. How many fire related incidents involving this juvenile (including the most recent episode) are reported by the juvenile, the juvenile's parents, or other available informants? This includes all fire experimentation with peers or alone, and all firesetting behavior with peers or alone.
- 1 or 2 times     3 - 4 times     More than 4 times

### Intent

3. With regard to **all past and current** fire related behaviors, indicate what the juvenile **intended to set on fire** in each fire related incident (mark all that apply). Has this juvenile ever:

**yes    no**

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit and watched the flame on a match or lighter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit an appropriate fire (e.g., a candle or barbecue)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit a small piece of paper, small object, toy, or twig (unattached to a plant) on fire, or singed an object            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit a small controlled vegetation fire (such as a small pile of leaves or twigs, or a part of a large plant)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit a bonfire (such as a large paper fire, wood-fueled fire, trash can or dumpster fire)                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit an accelerant by itself or lit an accelerant on any other type of fire (e.g., small fire, bonfire, wildfire, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit on fire the personal property of another person, such as a peer, classmate, or family member                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit on fire an unoccupied structure, or unoccupied vehicle   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit an uncontrolled wildfire   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit on fire an occupied structure, or occupied vehicle   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lit a fire to injure or kill an animal or person   |

### Outcome

4. Has any of the juvenile's fire related behavior resulted in any of the following **outcomes**? (mark all that apply).
- yes    no**
- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lighting on fire an unoccupied structure, or unoccupied vehicle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lighting an uncontrolled wildfire                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lighting on fire an occupied structure, or occupied vehicle     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lighting a fire that injured or killed an animal or person      |



## Fire F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

(714) 573-6725  
www.firefriends.org

Dear Parent,

Based on the information provided to the Fire FRIENDS program about the extent and nature of your child's firesetting behavior(s), we have made the following recommendations:

- 1-Hour Individual Fire Safety Education Class  
These classes are offered through educators at local fire agencies. If this is the recommended intervention, the Fire FRIENDS program will contact you by telephone to assist in setting up an appointment with an educator from the appropriate fire agency.
- Behavioral Health Evaluation  
In some cases, a child's use of fire or explosives may be a symptom of other underlying emotional or behavioral problems. In these circumstances, it can be helpful for the juvenile to receive a behavioral health evaluation to determine if any additional behavioral or counseling resources may be needed. These evaluations involve interviews with a behavioral health professional experienced in the assessment of juvenile firesetting behavior, and typically require two-hours to complete (1 hour with the parent and 1 hour with the juvenile). If this is a recommended intervention for your child, a representative of the Fire FRIENDS program will contact you by telephone to assist in scheduling a behavioral health evaluation.

If you choose to participate in the Fire FRIENDS program, all of the recommended interventions above are available to you and your child free of charge. Also, if it is not recommended but you believe that your child would benefit from the 6-hour group and/or a behavioral health evaluation, please feel free to contact the Fire FRIENDS office to request the more intensive level of intervention.

Your participation in the Fire FRIENDS program is voluntary. In some situations a fire investigator or the juvenile justice system may require a child to participate in a fire-safety diversion program such as Fire FRIENDS. This requirement is a separate contract between you and the fire agency or court. Although we recommend your child's participation in the Fire FRIENDS program as a free and professional means to complete this requirement, *you can choose not to participate or you may discontinue services*

*at any time once enrolled.* Should you decide not to complete the Fire FRIENDS program, please consult with the referring agency regarding the availability of alternatives that will satisfactorily meet their conditions for successful diversion.

It is our goal and sincere hope that your family's participation in the program will be viewed as a helpful and valuable experience. Keep in mind that all services of the Fire FRIENDS program are offered at no cost to your family.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me, at 714-573-6725.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you soon,

Trish Sysak  
Fire FRIENDS Program Coordinator  
Orange County Fire Authority  
1-714-573-6725  
[trishsysak@ocfa.org](mailto:trishsysak@ocfa.org)



## Fire F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

1-714-573-6725  
www.firefriends.org

Dear Parent,

Based on the information provided to the Fire FRIENDS program about the extent and nature of your child's firesetting behavior(s), we recommend that your child attend the following class:

- 6-Hour Group Fire Safety Education Class

This fire safety class is offered once a month by the Fire FRIENDS program. Topics include general fire safety, legal implications of firesetting behaviors, victim perspectives, coping with peer pressure, and the potential impact of current behavior on future goals. Please call the Fire FRIENDS office at 714-573-6725 to enroll your child. Dates for upcoming classes are listed below and can also be found on the Fire FRIENDS website, [www.firefriends.org](http://www.firefriends.org).

In addition to the 6-hour class, we also offer a free behavioral health evaluation. In some cases, a child's use of fire or explosives may be a symptom of other underlying emotional or behavioral problems. In these circumstances, it can be helpful for the juvenile to receive an evaluation to determine if any additional behavioral or counseling resources may be needed. These evaluations involve interviews with a behavioral health professional experienced in the assessment of juvenile firesetting behavior, and typically require two-hours to complete (1 hour with the parent and 1 hour with the juvenile). **If you feel your child would benefit from a behavioral health evaluation, you may call Susan Jester of Chapman University to schedule your appointment at (714) 997-6904.**

Your participation in the Fire FRIENDS program is voluntary. In some situations a fire investigator or the juvenile justice system may require a child to participate in a fire-safety diversion program such as Fire FRIENDS. This requirement is a separate contract between you and the fire agency or court. Although we recommend your child's participation in the Fire FRIENDS program as a free and professional means to complete this requirement, *you can choose not to participate or you may discontinue services at any time once enrolled.* Should you decide not to complete the Fire FRIENDS program, please consult with the referring agency regarding the availability of alternatives that will satisfactorily meet their conditions for successful diversion.

It is our goal and sincere hope that your family's participation in the program will be viewed as a helpful and valuable experience. Keep in mind that all services of the Fire FRIENDS program are offered free of charge. To enroll your child in class, or if you have any questions or concerns, please call me at 1-714-573-6725.

The following are guidelines for the 6 hour class, as well as general information.

Group Intervention Classes are held once a month on a Saturday from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Children's Hospital of Orange County. The class is free of charge, but **enrollment is necessary to attend**. Group dates are listed below:

August 20  
September 17  
October 15

Children's Hospital of Orange County is located at 455 South Main Street, Orange, CA 92868. The classes are held in conference rooms 1 and 2 on the third floor of the clinic building on the corner of Main Street and La Veta. Park on the third floor of the parking garage and enter through the 3rd story parking garage entrance to the hospital. You may enter the parking garage on Providence Street, off of Main Street, just north of La Veta. Follow the posted signs inside the building to the class location. Lunch is not provided. You are welcome to bring your own lunch, or to buy a lunch at one of the many fast food and sandwich shops within walking distance.

#### *Orange County Group Intervention Class Guidelines*

In order to receive the certificate of completion, the following guidelines must be met:

- Attend your assigned class date
- Appropriate dress and behavior are required
- **A parent or legal guardian must attend, even if enrollee is 18**
- You must attend the full 6 hours of class; make sure you are on time and do not leave early.
- If you cannot attend class please call 1-714-573-6725 at least one day in advance
- **If either parent or child does not understand English it is crucial for the family to bring someone 18 or older to interpret**

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you soon,

Trish Sysak  
Fire FRIENDS Program Coordinator  
Orange County Fire Authority  
1-714-573-6725  
[trishsysak@ocfa.org](mailto:trishsysak@ocfa.org)