

Escaping a Home Fire

A Lesson Plan for Children Ages 3 to 5



Learning Objectives

- ▶ Children will learn that if the smoke alarm beeps, there is probably a fire, and they should leave their home very quickly.
- ▶ Children will also learn the importance of a fire escape plan. They should help their parents make a map of their home so everyone can get out quickly and safely if a fire happens.

Items needed for in-class lesson

- ▶ A smoke alarm. A basic alarm will cost \$5 to \$10 at most home improvement stores OR ask your local fire department if they can loan you a smoke alarm.
 - ▶ Make sure that the smoke alarm is battery-powered, either as the main power source or as a back-up, so that the alarm will sound in the classroom.
- ▶ A copy of the parent flyer with the home escape plan (on website)
- ▶ A sample of the home escape plan with rooms and directional arrows (on website)
- ▶ Photographs to accompany Q&A section
- ▶ Copies of coloring page with the rhyme

Items needed for parent follow-up

- ▶ Copies of the parent letter (on website)
- ▶ Copies of the parent flyer with the home escape plan (on website)

Estimated Time to Complete the Lesson:
15-20 minutes

Lesson

Below is a list of questions and answers along with additional fire safety information to help guide you in teaching children about how to escape a fire.

1. **Q:** *Have you ever had a fire drill here/at school? What happens?*

A: *The fire alarm sounds and then we all go outside to our meeting place.*

NOTE: If they don't say the meeting place, tell them where it is.

2. **Q:** *How do you know when to leave?*

A: *You know because the fire bell rings or the smoke alarm sounds.*

3. **Q:** *A fire can also happen in our houses or apartments where we live. Do you know how we would know if a fire happens in our home?*

A: *There is something on the ceiling or wall that looks like this (show smoke alarm). It's called a smoke alarm. Fires make a lot of smoke, and this smoke alarm is always sniffing the air to check for any smoke. If it finds a lot of smoke, then it beeps very loudly to let you know that there is a fire. It's on the ceiling or high on the wall to smell the smoke. (Show photo of alarm on wall/ceiling.)*

4. **Q:** *Has anyone ever seen this in their home (the smoke alarm)? Have you heard what it sounds like?*

A: *Take answers of several children.*

I'll push this button so you can hear the sound it makes if a fire happens in your house or apartment. Cover your ears because it will be very loud!

NOTE: You may want to move to the other side of the room so that it's not quite as loud for the children.

Push the test button on the smoke alarm down and hold for 5 seconds. The smoke alarm should sound.

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5. **Q:** *So if you hear that sound in your home, what do you think you should do?*

A: *You should go outside as quickly as you can. Even if you are scared, you should never hide in a closet or under the bed. And don't stop to get any toys. Get outside!* (Show photo of family leaving house.)

NOTE: Emphasize this point because many children have been known to hide in a fire, and it can make it difficult for firefighters to find them.

You may hear children talk about the smoke alarm beeping and their parent fanning it or pushing a button and the smoke alarm goes off or taking the battery out of the alarm. You can explain that sometimes normal cooking can make the smoke alarm go off, but that they should always expect the beep to mean that there might be a fire and to ask their parent/guardian to check if there is a fire.

6. **Q:** *Do you know why the smoke alarm alarm beep is so loud?*

A: *Because if you are asleep, you want it to be able to wake you up.* (Show photo of girl sleeping.)

Activity: Learn a Rhyme

Tell the kids that we have a rhyme to help them remember what to do if they hear the smoke alarm beep. Say each line and have them repeat after you. And then repeat the entire rhyme together.

The house is on fire —
Don't hide, Go outside!
The alarm is beeping —
Don't hide, Go outside!
The smoke is getting higher —
Don't hide, Go outside!
Wake up if you're sleeping —
Don't hide, Go outside!

NOTE: There is also a coloring page with the rhyme that you can either send home with the children or do in the classroom.

Activity: Fire Drill

Tell the kids that they are now going to practice what they should do if they hear the smoke alarm beep.

Now we're going to practice what you should do. Just like when you hear the fire bell at school, if you hear the smoke alarm beep at home, you should go outside.

Let's everyone lie down and pretend to be asleep. I'll make the smoke alarm beep and when you hear that, then everyone should "wake up" and walk quickly to the door (don't run!) and make a line. We'll go out the _____ door and we'll meet at the _____.

Push the test button on the smoke alarm down and hold for 5 seconds. Alarm beeps and then all kids go to the meeting place. Have another teacher help kids get to the meeting place safely.

Activity: Fire Escape Plan

Tell the kids that they should now practice this at home with their parents and explain the process to them.

Now that we've practiced this here, you will also need to practice this at home. We will be giving each of your parents/guardians some information to help your family make a map of all the exits in your home. Here is what it can look like. (Hold up sample escape plan.) It's called the "home escape plan". It shows all the windows and doors in a home. You can work with an adult at home to mark TWO WAYS out of every room wherever you can, usually a door and a window.

Ask your parents to make a map like this of your own home (you can help them!) and then practice doing a fire drill at home just like we did here. We are giving your parents all of the information they need to do this. After you practice the fire drill at home, bring this map back to school next week and give it to _____.

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