

# Escaping Home Fires: A Lesson Plan for Children Ages 3 to 5

## Objectives:

Children will learn...

- what to do when they hear a smoke alarm beeping.
- the importance of making a fire escape map of their home
- the importance of practicing escaping from their home so they are ready in case of a fire.

## Items needed for in-class lesson

- A battery powered smoke alarm. A basic alarm costs \$5 - \$10 at a hardware store OR ask your local fire department if they can loan you one.
- Materials from Safe Kids:
  - Take home map with tips.
  - Take home parent signature page.
  - Example fire escape map.

## Activity: Questions and Answers

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.*
2. **Q:** *How do you know when to leave?*  
**A:** *You know because the fire 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. The alarm can sense smoke. If it finds a lot of smoke, then it beeps very loudly to let you know that there is a fire.*

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

**A:** *Push the test button on the smoke alarm down and hold for 5 seconds.*

**NOTE:** Before you press the button you may want children to cover their ears or move to the other side of the room so they are not scared.

5. **Q:** *If you hear the smoke alarm sound in your home, what should you 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 take anything with you.*

**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.

6. **Q:** *Why is the smoke alarm beep is so loud?*

**A:** *So you can hear the sound no matter where you are in the house and even if you are sleeping.*

**NOTE:** Children may have seen their parents fanning the smoke alarm, pushing a button to turn it off or taking the battery out of the alarm. Explain that normal cooking can make the smoke alarm sound. They should know that beeping means there may be a fire and ask an adult what to do.

## Activity: Learn a Rhyme

Below is a rhyme to help the students remember what to do if they hear the smoke alarm beep. Say each line and have them repeat after you. Next, 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!*

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## Activity: Fire Drill

First, identify a safe meeting spot outside and make sure children know where it is.

Next, practice what to do if the smoke alarm sounds.

1. Have children sit down or lie down and pretend they are sleeping.
2. Push the test button on the smoke alarm and hold for five seconds.
3. Have children get up, walk quickly to the classroom door and form a line.
4. Walk together to the safe meeting spot outside.

## Ideas from Other Preschools

- Have members of a local fire department come talk to the class about smoke alarms.
- Use a doll house to show escape routes since young children may understand a three dimensional example better.
- Meet with parents to discuss the fire safety lesson and why escape planning is important.
- Practice one fire drill in the classroom a month.
- Have firefighters come in dressed in full uniforms so that children can learn not to be afraid of them.
- Make fire safety the theme for the week with a different activity each day.
- Hang up fire safety words and pictures around the classroom and discuss. (fire hydrant, fire truck, firefighter, ladder, matches and lighter).
- Make fire trucks out of egg cartons.
- Take a field trip to the local firehouse.
- Hang black crepe paper in the doorway as pretend smoke so children can practice crawling under it.
- Create a play where children act out escaping from a fire.
- Make an obstacle course where children have to stay on their hands and knees to get to safety.

## Activity: Example Fire Escape Map

Use the example fire escape map to show children what their home maps will look like.

1. Draw where smoke alarms should be. Draw one in the living area, one outside of the bedroom doors, and one in each bedroom. Do not put one in or near the kitchen.
2. Draw arrows showing two ways out of each room through either a door or window.
3. Circle two exits from the home through the door in the kitchen and through the front door.
4. Draw an X for a safe meeting place outside. You can use the tree in this drawing as the safe meeting spot.

**\*\***Make sure to tell students that the safe meeting spot should be chosen ahead of time by their family. It should not be too close to the house or somewhere that is unsafe (across a busy street).

**\*\***If you think the preschoolers are having trouble understanding the map, you may want to try using a dollhouse as a 3D example.

Finally, tell children:

*Now that we've learned about how to escape from a fire here at school, you should also practice at home. We will give each of you a worksheet to complete with your family so you can make a map of all the exits in your home.*

*Once you make the map of your home and find all the safe exits, you and your family should practice escaping. When you have finished using the map to practice escaping, hang it up on your refrigerator or somewhere you can easily see it. Then have your parents/guardian sign the letter and bring it back to school.*

Preschools should collect and count the signed letters. Then they can go to the Safe Kids contest website and enter their results to win.

<http://www.safekids.org/educators/preschool-fire-safety-contest.html>