



*FIRE*ighting Consequence Awareness Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Programs background?

During the mid-1980's the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) and the MFB shared concerns for the safety of young people. Too many young people were being badly burned in fires and too many were responsible for actually lighting these fires.

After a short pilot period Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program (JFAIP) became fully operational supporting families to deal with a young person's fire play or firesetting.

The foundation of the program is the delivery of a confidential service, by specially trained operational fire-fighters to 6 -17YO's who have engaged in fire risk behaviour (FRB).

The program educates and informs young person as to the dangers and consequences of fire risk behaviour and increase their awareness of fire safety in and around the home and community.

Over the years the program has seen many changes not only in the shaping of JFAIP but also in many external services/agencies that network with or are stakeholders to JFAIP. One notable change seen amongst stakeholders and supporters was terms used, and it became very evident the word "juvenile" was worthy of discussion as the term 'juvenile' is out-dated and does not reflect the current accepted terminology ascribed by others oriented towards assisting "young people".

On 1st July 2020 Victoria's fire services were reformed to meet the needs of our rapidly changing State – now and into the future.

The major change was creating a modern fire service; Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) bought together MFB and CFA career firefighters to serve Metropolitan Melbourne and major Regional Centres and restoring the CFA to a volunteer firefighter organisation.

At the same time of transitioning to FRV the program undertook the following changes to reflect and be consistent with current idiom and government program naming practices:

1. The Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program (JFAIP) undergo a name change to avoid the term 'juvenile' and reflect accepted terminology. The proposed name change was endorsed and implemented from 01 July 2020 being "Firelighting Consequence Awareness Program (Fire-CAP)".
2. Defined program delivers as firefighter(s) not Practitioner(s).

Why do young people light fires?

Young people, matches and lighters are a deadly mix. So why do young people partake in fire risk behaviours? There are several reasons:

1. **fascinated** by or **curious** about the colour, light and energy released by flames.
2. Some young people **seek attention** through fire lighting. This may be in response to a change in their family situation or pressures resulting from learning or social difficulties.
3. **Peer pressure** is a common cause of fire lighting and generally associated with low self-esteem.
4. **Anger and revenge** associated with family or friendship problems can trigger fire lighting.

5. Fires resulting from **malicious or mischievous behaviour** can be caused by a young person who is experiencing family or social difficulties.
6. **Boredom**

Younger children tend to light fires in and around their homes. They rarely intend to cause damage with fire, while the adolescent is more likely to show off, experiment or be more motivated by peers.

Where is the program held?

The Program is generally delivered at the young persons place of residence where the firefighter will work closely with the young person and their primary carer to reduce and control the young person's FRB in and around the home and encourage stronger fire safe behaviour (FSB).

Conducting the program in the place of residence environment increases the success of the program in that the:

- young person being in a familiar environment may be more engaged as they feel more comfortable and less intimidated by the firefighter's attendance;
- The firefighter can observe the home environment and highlight fire risk practices which may assist to reduce the young person's FRB opportunity and can take the opportunity to undertake a fire safety audit with the young person (and primary carer) ensuring the home has appropriate protection, prevention and the family are able to respond to any emergency.

Though the program is promoted as at place of residence there are times, for the importance of a more effective program delivery and positive outcomes an alternate venue be sourced and used.

What is the cost of the program?

The program is a FREE. The program is voluntary unless referred as a condition of the young person's sentencing to fire related charges.

How's the program conducted?

The young person is visited by the firefighter over a number of weeks. Each session takes about 45 -60 minutes (depending on the young persons attention span) and usually spaced one week (maximum 14 days) apart.

The program content and approaches vary according to the age and maturity and severity of the fire behaviour of the young person. The first visit is a formal interview followed by the Interventions.

During the interventions the firefighter uses a variety of resources which may include role-plays, videos, stories, planned activities and general discussions especially on their own firefighting and training experiences

The first priority of the firefighter is to establish a good relationship with the young person before any information is presented.

What are the key aspects of JFAIP?

A crucial aspect of the program is the development of trust between the firefighter and the young person. This must occur for the program to begin. In partnership, the firefighter, young person and primary carer aim to develop an awareness to consequence of inappropriate fire, fire safety and actively work towards a safer home and community environment.

The program consists of three components:

1. Trust building -The firefighter aims to develop a positive relationship with the young person through discussions about them and any relevant interest.
2. The program (*Syllabus*) -The aim of the syllabus is to increase the young person's understanding of the consequences of their FRB and increase their FSB.
3. Positive reinforcement -Throughout the program there is a strong emphasis on providing the young person with positive feedback for non-fire risk behaviour and completed work.

The young person is free of any recrimination for past deeds in the process

What are the Primary Carer's requirements?

The success of the program (that is discouraging any further fire risk behaviour) is built on the firefighter raising awareness to the dangers, risk and consequences of fire risk behaviour using their own firefighting experiences and training (we acknowledge the best practice in treating cognitive and anti-social behaviours is by subject matter experts in child/adolescent development), and the primary carer giving their total support (firefighters cannot change the fire risk behaviour on their own) and leading by example in providing a fire safe environment.

In order for the program to succeed:

- The primary carer should follow up on all the tasks set by the firefighter.
- The primary carer give the young person praise and/or encouragement when they carry out fire safe behaviour or complete set tasks.
- the firefighter may create rules around being fire safe, the primary carer should maintain these rules, have set consequences if these rules are broken and apply the penalties.

Some young people will play with fire after the program. In such an event, the program can be re-initiated, so keep us informed and do not feel you are burdening us.

Can the firefighter who attends deal with my child's other behavioural problems?

The firefighter can't do it all. We are only there for the FRB.

There are three levels to dealing with fire risk behaviour:

1. Fire Service only --providing Fire Safety Education (FSE).
2. Integrated approach (Fire Service and Allied Health Professional --providing assistance with emotional, psychological or behavioural concerns)
3. Tandem approach where either Allied Health Professional or FSE are involved in order of priority (where it is anticipated Allied Health Professional be required first)

As it is not uncommon for the young person with FRB to have a learning difficulty, social or behaviour problems, the best practice to reducing a young person's FRB may require a multi-disciplinary approach i.e. firefighter (dealing with the fire risk behaviour) and the young person's Allied Health Professional (treating the young person's other behavioural issues) working together.

The firefighter can assist in support and advice on other external family services to help the young person and family with other behavioural problems.