

# Tip Sheet

## for Fire Instructors working with Children with Special Needs



**1)** Visit as many special education classes in your community as possible. Take the time to get to know the teacher, to visit classrooms, and develop a relationship with the children in the classroom.

**2)** In the special education classroom, demonstrate to children how to:

- a. crawl low in smoke
- b. stop, drop, and roll
- c. evacuate from a home and go to a meeting place

Then, have the children practice and demonstrate these behaviors to you.

**3)** Identify every home in your district that has a child with special needs. Contact school systems, early intervention programs, Step Ahead Councils, child care providers. Identify in these conversations what help these children need.

**4)** Teach children differences between hot and cold by using a heating pad.

**5)** Advise parents to have baby monitors on hand — one in child's room and one accessible to parents for immediate communication in an emergency.

**6)** Teach children what smoke looks like and demonstrate how to stay low.

**7)** Teach children to add blankets, stuffed animals or rolled towels at bottom of door.

**8)** Do children know how to take screens out of windows? If not, they need to be shown and practice how to remove a screen.

**9)** Model full firefighter gear to children repeatedly. Let the children see you put on the gear. Talk to them through the oxygen mask. Let children try on the uniforms.

**10)** Let children go into a fire truck. Let them touch the truck, see the lights, hear the horn.

**11)** Firefighters should have a disability awareness training on different conditions to be able to work with many children with special needs.

**12)** Firefighters should be trained to work with special medical equipment, such as monitors, ventilators, and portable oxygen.

**13)** Show children what a cigarette lighter looks like and what matches look like. Stress the danger of picking up these products.

**14)** Practice with children what to say when calling 911. Have children practice dialing 911 and talking with an operator.

**15)** Suggest to families that one course of action would be to set up an alarm system that alerts the 911 operator that there is an emergency. Or, a family may want to set up a code word that alerts operator that there is an emergency.

**16)** Demonstrate installing batteries into a smoke detector. Have children return the demonstration to you.

**17)** Emphasize to children the importance of getting out immediately in a fire. Before you teach children how to put out fires like grease fires, trash fires, or other types of fires, determine that they are able to distinguish between differences in situations. Teach children how to put out fires on someone else by using stop, drop, and roll, and helpful resources such as blankets.

**18)** Emphasize to children that it's ok to tell your parents that something is wrong, even if they start a fire. To not tell someone else is a mistake and to not ask for help means the situation could get worse.

**19)** Demonstrate universal steps to take if a child is burned. Have children show you steps, such as cooling a burn.

**20)** Spend time demonstrating how to use a fire extinguisher and how to treat a burn when talking to older children with special needs.