

A Structured Approach to Juvenile Firesetter Intervention

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**CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Abstract**

The problem was that the Lenexa Fire Department's (LFD) juvenile firesetter intervention did not have clearly defined practices. The purpose of this applied research paper was to identify elements of juvenile firesetter programs that would provide the LFD a structured approach to ensure effectiveness. This study used a descriptive research methodology to answer three research questions: (a) What are the most common practices or steps in program development; (b) What are the required components of a juvenile firesetter program; and (c) What are the guidelines used to measure a juvenile firesetter program? This project used a comprehensive literature review to determine current practices for juvenile firesetter programs. Interviews and a questionnaire were utilized for literature comparison and determination of practical applications for the LFD. The results indicate that most juvenile firesetter programs are utilizing the same basic components that include a juvenile and family interview, future fire risk determination, fire safety education, and referral to mental health professionals when appropriate. Training of program staff, early intervention, education prior to firesetting occurrences, and follow up procedures are areas identified that impact the success of the programs. The recommendations for the LFD include determining age appropriate educational resources tailored to firesetting behaviors, development of a standard practice guideline for the firesetter program, development of a pre-incident educational program for families, identification of a data collection system for juvenile records, and implementation of follow up procedures for all program participants.

Table of Contents

Certification Statement ..... 2

Abstract ..... 3

Table of Contents ..... 4

Introduction ..... 5

Background & Significance ..... 6

Literature Review ..... 8

Procedures ..... 19

Results ..... 22

Discussion ..... 27

Recommendations ..... 31

Reference List ..... 35

Appendices

Appendix A: Personal Interview Transcripts ..... 37

Appendix B: Questionnaire Invitation Letter ..... 45

Appendix C: Questionnaire and Raw Data Results ..... 46

### A Structured Approach to Juvenile Firesetter Intervention

Risk reduction includes processes at local, state and federal levels. Procedures to reduce communicable diseases, prevent drinking and driving, increase seatbelt usage and utilization of smoke detectors are examples of programs enacted to limit risk by changing behaviors of the public. Successful risk reduction includes several elements; commitment of individuals, organizational backing, community support, as well as planning and evaluating how change can occur (National Fire Academy, 2009 SM 1-31).

Over the years the fire service has changed from a reactive to a proactive industry in addressing community risk. Since inception the focus of the fire service was to protect the lives and property of the community. While incident response is still a primary focus, the fire service has evolved and expanded the services provided. No longer would it be acceptable to simply respond to fires. The prevention of predictable events through code enforcement and educational programs is a key component in today's fire service (Serna, 2006).

One area the fire service has addressed is the danger resulting from juvenile fire setting behaviors. Between the years 2003 and 2006, Flynn (2009) estimates that 58,600 fires occurred annually as a result of juvenile fire setting. "These fires resulted in an estimated 180 civilian deaths, 980 civilian injuries and \$ 287.5 million in direct property damage" (para. 4). The significance of these statistics has made juvenile firesetting an issue the fire service cannot ignore (Flynn, 2009).

The problem is the Lenexa Fire Department's (LFD) juvenile firesetter intervention practices are not clearly defined. The purpose of this applied research paper is to identify elements of juvenile firesetter programs that will provide the LFD a structured approach to ensure effectiveness.

This study uses a descriptive research methodology to answer three research questions: (a) What are the most common practices or steps in program development? (b) What are the required components of a juvenile firesetter program? (c) What are the guidelines used to measure a juvenile firesetter program?

### **Background**

The Lenexa Fire Department recognized the problem of juvenile fire setting in the 1990's. Once the issue was identified, personnel began to provide fire safety training to juveniles involved in fire events. What is unclear is how the approach was developed, how educational resources were identified for various age groups, and if the approach is successful. The approach was considered effective due to the lack of reports suggesting recidivism was occurring. It does appear that there was, at least, an initial plan on how to address juvenile's involved in fire setting. The plan appears to align with some of the framework identified in the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook that was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The LFD intervention practices are as follows:

Juveniles who are in need of fire setting intervention have been identified in one of three ways. Parents who recognize fire play events contact the department and seek education for their child. Participation in this format is voluntary. Secondly, participants are identified as the result of an incident response, in which the fire was started by a juvenile. The LFD makes contact with the parents and informs them of the educational opportunity. Lastly, the court system will require education through the LFD for juveniles involved in fire events in Lenexa. At this point there is a legal ramification to the event and their participation is part of sentencing or probation (Juvenile Case Files).

The process begins with a juvenile and parent interview. The juvenile is interviewed independently of the parents, utilizing the Federal Emergency Management Association

interview form. While some of the information on this form can be used to track demographic data, the main intent is to determine the risk of the juvenile participating in future fires. The results of the interview, categorize the juvenile in the *little*, *definite*, or *extreme risk* for future fire.

Depending on the results of the interviews, the intervention plan is determined. The intervention plan for juveniles in the *little risk* category consist only of fire education. Various resources and assignments can be included. For the *definite risk* and *extreme risk* categories, the intervention plan begins with fire education. However, many of these individuals have other concerns or psychological disorders that factor into their fire activities. This requires referral to professional counselors who can provide service that the LFD does not have the resources to provide.

While the interview form indicates that professional counseling is required for juveniles in the *definite* and *extreme risk* categories, the LFD does not have an agreement with any specific provider to complete this task. Social Rehabilitation Services would be contacted, but research has not been performed to ensure necessary services are available.

While many of these practices might be included in an LFD program as we move forward, there needs to be a more structured approach. For example, current practices help identify the risk for future fire events but not what specific type of education is appropriate for the various risk levels and age groups. The practices also do not address follow-up procedures to determine the effectiveness of the program (Juvenile Case Files).

Additionally, juvenile information is not tracked in a database. Records, such as they are, are kept in file folders that have been relocated several times over the years. Ensuring that records have not been lost or are, at least, currently stored at a central location has proven

difficult. The challenge then becomes how to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices when there is potentially ineffective, incomplete, and inaccessible data and where follow-up was not completed with the participants.

This research is related to the National Fire Academy Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction course and corresponds to Unit 3 “The student will be able to design a draft plan for a local risk-reduction initiative” (National Fire Academy, 2009, SM 3-3). This research also corresponds with Unit 5 “The Executive Fire Officer will be able to develop and implement a strategy for changing local policy regarding a pertinent community risk-reduction issue” (National Fire Academy, 2009, SM 5-3). Additionally, this applied research project correlates to the United States Fire Administration’s first operational objective, “Reduce risk at the local level through prevention and mitigation” (National Fire Academy, 2009, II-2).

### **Literature Review**

The United States Fire Administration (2008) suggests that public education programs should be developed with systematic approach to address not only the overall problem but how it manifests itself in a given community. Additionally, once the implementation is complete a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the program is necessary. To that end, a four step process is suggested to assist in developing a successful program. The four steps are discussed in the following section.

- 1) Program development should begin with a community risk analysis to determine what the largest risks are in the community. “One of the mistakes made in program development is to create one based upon perceived need. This approach can be costly in terms of misdirected resources, continued property loss, injuries and death” (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2008, p. 1). Risk assessment guides the development process



by focusing on specific data to identify community trends. It's factual information that evaluates the cause of the problem, target audiences, affected individuals, and a solution. This information lays the ground work for a community risk profile. The risk profile relates the data to the demographics of the community, the public perception of the problem, political support, and available resources. A problem statement will be evident after the information is reviewed. Developing a problem statement provides an overview of the problem, creates an understanding of the issue, and a vision for the plan.

- 2) Once the problem is clearly defined the next step is identifying an approach that evaluates community resources that would be beneficial in the solution. This team approach is accomplished by building partnerships with organizations that have a vested interest in the issue or provide services that would be beneficial to a solution. For most community risks there are organizations outside the fire service that can provide valuable knowledge or resources in addressing an issue. Building partnerships can be accomplished through networking, internet sources, previously established relationships, or identifying organizations that are already actively addressing the issue.
- 3) Once the risk is identified and partnerships have been developed the focus changes to creation of an intervention strategy. An intervention strategy is the action plan for what is going to be accomplished, how it will be accomplished, and how the effectiveness will be measured. It should also include goals and desired outcomes.
- 4) Once the program is developed, implementation is the next step. The suggested procedure is to begin with a pilot implementation to determine the results. Modifications can be made based upon the results achieved with the pilot program. The implementation

plan should address roles and responsibilities of each member in the implementation process. It should also include a marketing component in order for the target audience to be aware of the program.

Another program development format that can be utilized is a logic model. The logic model is used as the basis for planning and evaluating a program. A logic model utilizes the three main ideas of input, output and outcomes. A link is established from the problem to the intervention through inputs and outputs which are linked to outcomes. Input refers to any resource that will be required to make the program work such as staff, budget, material, and technology. The output refers to any service, products, education, or activities that will be provided. The outcome is simply the change that the program is designed to produce (McCawley, 2007).

The design is to view input, output, and outcomes through a series of “if-then” relationships. These relationships are utilized to assess the influence internal and external factors will have on the long term success. Logic modeling includes six steps which are summarized as follows:

1. It begins by collecting relevant information on the program This is a research component that gathers as much information as possible on similar programs, the writing of others on the topic, strategic plan goals, interviews from stakeholders, and any other source that will help identify potential pitfalls or issues.
2. The next step is describing the problem the program will solve. This comes from the information collected in the first step and is the basis for everything that follows in the program. The problem should include target audiences, external influence, and stakeholder identification.

3. Step three is building the logic model. The logic model structure should be specific to the program. It should only be as elaborate as is required to clearly outline the structure and need only include the key components so that the stakeholder will understand the workings of the program. One of the pitfalls of the logic model is building a structure so intricate that it cannot be easily followed or understood.
4. Building a logic diagram is the next step. The diagram will include text and is a visual aid in understanding the linkage of each component. The goal of the diagram is to utilize short phrases or single words to illustrate the various aspects of the program. Each component is then described more fully in an accompanying text document.
5. Verifying the logic model with the stakeholders is the next step. This is critical since not all of the stakeholders will have been involved in the model development. This should be a detailed process that includes how the program will work and the influence various conditions will have on achieving the goals.
6. Using the logic model in monitoring and evaluating is the last step. The important point is determining what information to collect and what to assess. Performance indicators are defined to determine if the planned activities or products bring about the intended result (United States Department of Energy, 2008).

In the book “Developing Schoolwide Programs to Prevent & Manage Problem Behaviors” an additional program development model is identified. It begins with a clearly defined mission statement. This is followed by identifying the purpose of the program. The purpose includes expectations of desired behavior changes. Once the purpose and mission are identified, a very specific set of responsibilities are established. In this particular program,

responsibilities were spelled out for the students, faculty, and staff. The responsibilities were designed to provide focus on the behaviors the problem statement intended to address. This program also included partnering with the parents who also had established responsibilities. Extensive lists of procedures were also established that reinforced the responsibilities. The last part of the program was a monitoring component. Monitoring in the program included progress reports, behavior screenings, data analysis of behavior success and failures, and self-assessment surveys (Lane, Kalberg, and Lane, 2009).

The literature suggests that program development can be accomplished several ways and can be specific to the type of program being developed. It is clear, however, that successful program development begins with a plan that focuses on identifying the problem. This can be accomplished a number of ways; through an assessment of the greatest risk, identifying the target audience, or may be as simple as determining what the program needs to accomplish. It is also important to identify the resources necessary to accomplish the plan. After the planning phase, some type of implementation component is necessary. Again, this component can be program specific. As part of the implementation component, a way to market the program to the target audience must be identified. Lastly, the literature suggests that some type of program monitoring must occur to measure the effectiveness of the approach being utilized.

Applying the program development model to a juvenile firesetter program can be challenging. Hoover (2003-2004) suggest that the one of the difficulties faced in dealing with juveniles firesetters issues is the different aspects considered by counselors, police officers and firefighters. Even the classifications of risk levels vary greatly between various professions, making a common understanding challenging. While motivations for firesetting behaviors have been identified with a number of subtypes, perhaps the simplest way to classify them is identified

in the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook where they are classified as *Little*, *Definite*, and *Extreme Risk*. All other subtypes can easily fit into these broad categories (Hoover, 2003; Gaynor, 2002).

The first component of a juvenile firesetter intervention program is the identification phase. Juveniles in need of firesetter intervention are identified in a number of ways: parents, caregivers, and school staff will witness fire setting behavior and forward the information to program providers. Fire service and law enforcement personnel also identify candidates as the result of incident response in which fire setting behavior initiated the response. In most cases, participation in the program is voluntary. Depending upon the significance of the incident, the individual whose property was damaged, history of fire setting, and juvenile justice guidelines participation in the program may be mandatory. Regardless of the circumstances the program begins with the identification of juveniles who are demonstrating fire setting behaviors (Gaynor, 2002).

Once a juvenile is identified as a candidate for the program, contact with the parents is an immediate priority. Once contact is initiated there are several procedures that can be completed including explanation of the program, requesting the parents to participate in the process, and collection of information on the juvenile. Once this information is communicated and the desired information is collected an interview should be scheduled (Gaynor, 2002)

Evaluation of the juvenile's fire behavior is the next component and success of the program relies heavily on the ability to accurately evaluate the extent of the fire problem. This is accomplished through personal interviews. An interview is conducted with the family members separately from the juvenile. The interview is a structured format to determine the potential for future fire involvement. "The outcome of an evaluation is the classification of juveniles and

their families into three risk levels” (Gaynor, 2002, p. 15).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides two tools to complete these interviews. They can be used individually or in combination depending on the age of the child and the extent of previous fire history learned about during the initial contact. The two tools are the Risk Survey and the Comprehensive FireRisk Evaluation forms. The Risk Survey is a form that is less comprehensive and will require less time to complete. It focuses solely on the fire behavior aspects. It contains two separate documents, the Family Risk Survey and the Child Risk Survey.

The Comprehensive FireRisk form focuses not only on the fire behavior but also incorporates psychological and social issues that may also be involved with the behaviors. It consists of four parts that include a Family FireRisk Evaluation, Juvenile FireRisk Evaluation, Parent FireRisk Questionnaire, and Comprehensive FireRisk Analysis. Both of these tools have been validated to a 95% - 99% range of statistical accuracy. But the literature reiterates that validation of the forms is only the first step and in order to achieve accurate results the interviewers need to be trained to administer the tools. “A trained interviewer who follows the interview process indicated on the forms will a high degree of success achieving the goal of identifying the risk of future fire setting behaviors” (Gaynor, 2002, p. 16).

Once the risk of future fire setting has been identified, an intervention plan can begin. There are three factors to consider when determining an intervention plan; severity of the fire setting behavior, the ability of the juvenile to understand the fire safety material, and the age of the child. The first step that should be included for all risk categories is education. While the literature does not recommend specific educational material, it does suggest age appropriate topics.

For three and four year old age groups, the topics include stop, drop and roll practices, notifying adults when matches or lighters are found, and familiarization with firefighters gear and why it is worn. For five and six year old age groups fire safety information consist of a discussion related specifically to the child's fire, home exit drills, and role playing activities of safe fire behavior. For seven to nine year old groups, the fire safety topics can include fire safe behavior, peer pressure, fire survival skills, civil liability and burn prevention. For 10 to 18 year old age groups, the topics include home fire safety inspections, fire behavior, peer pressure, legal liabilities, arson, burn prevention, and basic fire chemistry. Individual programs will need to identify the material they will utilize and the age appropriateness of each (Gaynor, 2002).

There is an additional component for those that are identified in the *definite* and *extreme* risk categories. It is based upon the premise that the demonstrated behavior has additional underlying issues that fire education will not solve. For these individuals referral to community agencies that can include social service, mental health professionals, law enforcement personnel or juvenile justice is necessary. The referral may be more challenging to achieve when program participation is voluntary. The training of the interviewer and the approach utilized with the parent will be critical in gaining consent (Gaynor, 2002).

The last component of the program consists of a follow up with participants. The goals of the follow up contacts are to reinforce the education provided and to gain information on the program's effectiveness in reducing fire setting behavior. The literature suggests that contact should be made within four to six weeks after exiting the program. This initial contact provides a limited view of the program's effectiveness since it covers a short period of time. Based upon that fact, a second contact between six and twelve months is recommended. The format for the contact is determined by the individual program but can include telephone calls, written contact,

or personal visits (Gaynor, 2002).

Fire District of Breckenridge, Colorado's program is consistent with the components identified in *Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook*. Assessment through interviews, fire education, and referral to professional counseling services when appropriate are the main functions of their program. But an additional component in their program is the education provided prior to fire setting incidents. This is a proactive approach that provides fire education to children, parents, school staff, and other community agencies. The design is to reduce behaviors prior to fire setting events. It provides information about the prevalence of juvenile fires and assists caregivers in identifying unsafe actions (Anonymous, 2010).

West Metro Fire Rescue also established a component in their program that is proactive. They identified the most at risk age groups for fire setting behaviors. Based upon the information they collected fifth and eighth graders were the age groups most at risk in their community. An educational program was developed that is presented to these age groups in all schools in their fire response area (Lombardi, 2009).

Another concept that was briefly identified in the *Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook* that had been frequently mentioned during literature review is the idea of building task forces or coalitions. The approach is for the fire service to work in conjunction with other agencies that have a vested interest in reducing juvenile fires. These individual organizations include schools, parents, and insurance companies as well as agencies that may already be addressing this issue in their organization such as burn centers, police departments, juvenile justice, mental health, and social services. The idea is that the coalition approach provides the benefit of the various experiences and expertise of each agency to provide a more comprehensive approach. It also has the potential to provide additional resources, both personnel and budget, to



address the problem. It also ensures that the fire service has a partner for the referral component of the program (McGarry, Cole, Crandall, and Kourofsky, 2010).

The literature indicates that the basic components of juvenile firesetter programs are similar. They include an assessment of future fire risk through an interview process, fire education, and when necessary referral to qualified counselors in the mental health area. Providing educational programs, before fire setting behavior has occurred, to stakeholders and at risk populations can also be a beneficial component. Finally, incorporating a broader approach for juvenile firesetting intervention by including other agencies that share an interest in addressing the issue is an approach that the literature review indicates is a growing trend.

Whether a program is being newly developed or has been in place for a significant period, the ability to evaluate the effectiveness is essential. Program evaluation is a systematic assessment of program outcomes as compared to the established goals. It measures if the program works in its current format and if there are ways to improve performance. If descriptive goals regarding what the program will accomplish were not established during the development phase, program evaluation is difficult. Evaluation begins by determining what information is needed to measure performance and establishing how it will be reported. This can be accomplished through survey of participants, interviews, data analysis, change of behavior observations, or demonstration of the knowledge gained (Shackman, 1998).

“Developing appropriate and measureable indicators during the planning phase is key to sound evaluation” (McCawley, 2007, p. 4). He suggests that perhaps the most effective way to start the development process by determining the desired outcomes. Short, medium, and long range outcomes can be established to highlight the things the program will accomplish if effectively developed. Short term goals represent changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Medium range goals represent changes in behavior, practices and procedures. Long range goals represent changes in the environment, social conditions, and economic conditions (McCawley, 2007)

There are three basic evaluation methods. Goal based evaluation is a measurement of how the program is meeting the predetermined goals. It answers questions related to how the goals were established, how effective the program been in reaching them, reasonableness of the timeline, and adequacy of resources. Process based evaluation focuses on how the program works. It answers questions related to what is required to provide the program, what type of training is required for program staff, how customers are identified, and the general process participants complete. Outcome based evaluation is designed to measure the programs ability to achieve specific results. It focuses on measuring the changes in behaviors, knowledge, perception, attitude or skills of the participants. The three evaluation methods can be used independently or combined to provide a more thorough measurement of program performance (McNamara, 2011)

Data collection and analysis is the key is to program evaluation. Baseline statistics are compared to benchmarks of the desired level of change. The collection of data also provides the opportunity to report the results to sponsoring organizations and the community. The utilization of a data retrieval system that provides easy access to the information being collected is critical. Otherwise, the evaluation process becomes labor intensive and fails to be completed (USFA, 2008).

Regardless of the evaluation methods used, the ability to analyze quantitative and qualitative data will be required. The ability to analyze data does not require exceptional mathematic skills. It is more about determining required information, collecting the necessary

information, linking the data to program components and then using the data to explain, support or challenge the performance of the program (Earl & Katz, 2006).

The literature indicates that all programs need to have an evaluation component. This is critical to determine if the desired results are being achieved. The format of the component is flexible but the literature suggest it should be goal, process, or outcome based.

### **Procedures**

The procedures followed for this research project began a discussion with the Fire Chief related to an important researchable problem within the LFD. The results of the discussion indicated a desire to identify components of effective Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Programs.

Research for this project began during the Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction on campus program. The National Fire Academy Learning Resource Center was utilized. The United States Fire Administration Online Card Catalog provided publications and resources to identify articles of interest and relevance.

Upon returning to Kansas, work continued to refine the problem statement and research questions. Research was conducted at the Johnson County Central Resource Library which provided additional relevant information. Research databases, Yahoo, and Google internet searches were completed which provided articles with supporting data.

Based upon the findings in the literature review, a rough draft of a questionnaire was developed to obtain essential information related to the research questions: (a) What are the most common practices or steps in program development; (b) What are the required components of a juvenile firesetter program; and (c) What are the guidelines used to measure a juvenile firesetter programs?

The questionnaire was designed to determine the most common practices used in program development, essential components of a juvenile firesetter programs, the effectiveness of the

components, and the steps utilized to measure the effectiveness of the program. The structure of the questionnaire consisted of 12 questions and addressed the desired information in the following format:

Questions 1-2 determined the reasons for the program as well as the steps used during development and included raw data in addition to the provided responses.

Questions 3-6 elicited information about the specific components of the program and included raw data in addition to provided responses.

Questions 7-11 elicited information regarding how the effectiveness of the program is measured as well as the data storage system utilized.

Questions 11-12 respondents' provided opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of their firesetter program.

Assistant Professor of Marketing at Mid-America Nazarene University, Mrs. Lisa Wallentine provided information to assist with questionnaire development. Recommendations provided by Professor Wallentine were as follows:

- 1) Scaled response answers provide for more magnitude, intensity, and mathematical analysis than Yes/No questions.
- 2) Add an "other" option on multiple-choice questions to provide a place to answer when the category doesn't fit the respondent's situation.
- 3) Add a couple of general overall questions that allow respondents the ability to answer in their own words, the greatest strength and greatest weaknesses of their program.

Once the changes to the questionnaire were completed, (Appendix C) the information was provided to Training Division staff for assistance in publication via an online electronic feedback instrument.

The Division Chief of Administration possessed an electronic mail address list for fire service

organizations throughout the country. This list was compiled through professional organization membership, conference attendance, and Executive Fire Officer Participants.

The questionnaire was distributed to 358 fire service organizations via electronic mail. The questionnaire was accessible from May 9, 2011 until May 23, 2011. Of the 358 targeted recipients, an error message was received from (29) fire service organizations, leaving total of (329) distributed questionnaires. Total of (92) respondents completed the questionnaire.

The author made phone contact with several fire departments located in the Johnson County, Kansas area. This was a two part process as the first contact was necessary to identify the appropriate personnel responsible for the Juvenile Firesetter Program. A second contact was initiated by the author to schedule an interview with the appropriate personnel.

Personal interviews were conducted by phone and followed the questionnaire format but the multiple choice options were not included. The answers provided were recorded by written transcript (Appendix A). A total of five interviews were completed.

### *Limitations*

While there was a significant amount of information dealing the juvenile firesetting issues, much of it focused on personal characteristics and studies related to psychological causes. This is important information but was not relevant to this research project. Additionally, there are a variety of resources that provide juvenile firesetter education and intervention, but a limited number that described the various components of the program.

The accuracy of the questionnaire results is entirely dependent on the respondents understanding of the juvenile firesetter program. It could not be verified that the information received from the questionnaire participants was entirely accurate and thorough.

The detailed information desired required the use of questions with multiple answer formats. It

is more challenging to analyze data and determine preference with these type questions.

The questionnaire did not include questions related to characteristics and causes of juvenile firesetting behaviors. Both factors could result in considerations that are not addressed in this research.

## **Results**

### **Research Question 1 Results**

What are the most common practices or steps in program development? Pertinent data related to the research question was obtained in questions one and two.

Question one asked "what was the basis for the development of a juvenile firesetter program in your department?" A total of 92 respondents answered the question. Results indicate that 61 (66.3%) of the respondents indicated that juvenile firesetter behaviors in their jurisdiction was the reason the program was developed. Program development based upon national trends on juvenile firesetting was selected by 22 (23.9%). Additionally, 9 (9.8%) of the respondents identified alternative reasons for program development by selecting the "other" category. The written comments are included in Appendix C.

The results from personal interviews were similar with 4 (80%) reporting that local firesetting issues were the reason the program was developed. S. Fricke (personal communications, May 5, 2011) agreed that local firesetting behaviors were the reason an intervention program was developed. She indicated that the issue was recognized in the early 1990's and a program was put in place shortly after that time.

Question two asked "what program development steps or models were utilized to develop the juvenile firesetter program?" The question was presented in a "select all that apply" format and included "other" as an option with an available text box for a description. A total of 82 respondents answered the question with 10 having skipped for an unknown reason. The majority of the respondents

identified either research of other firesetter programs 54 (65.9%) or FEMA's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook 50 (61.0%) as the model for program development. Design similar to other departmental public education programs was selected by 11 (13.4%) of respondents. Only 8 (9.8%) of the respondents indicated a logic model was utilized. Twelve (14.6%) selected "other"; and several indicated a state program model is utilized in their area. Additional written comments are included in Appendix C.

Personal interviews revealed similar findings as the questionnaire but all five indicated that the review of other programs was the development model used. T. Roberts (personal interview on May 5, 2011) indicated that Overland Park Fire Department specifically used the program development model from Fire Stoppers as opposed to reviewing multiple programs.

### **Research Question 2 Results**

What are the essential components of a juvenile firesetter programs? Pertinent data related to the research question was obtained in questions 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Question three asked "How are juvenile firesetters identified?" The question was presented in a "select all that apply" format and included "other" as an option with an available text box for a description. A total of 82 respondents answered the question with 10 having skipped for an unknown reason. The results indicated that there are a variety of methods in which juveniles are identified; fire department personnel 79 (89.0%), law enforcement 65 (79.3%), parents 65 (79.3%), schools 54 (65.9%), and department of justice 28 (34.1%). Additionally, 15 (18.3%) selected "other"; with the written comments included in Appendix C.

While some of the personal interview results were similar, G. Hunter (personal interview May 5, 2011) indicated that referral from parents and through department personnel during incident response are the only ways program candidates are identified. He further indicated that

schools had not been particularly concerned about the issue and had not provided any support.

R. Mosher (personal interview May 5, 2011) agreed that parents and department personnel help identify juveniles but also indicated that the court system identifies juvenile who exhibit fire setting behaviors and refers them to the program.

Question four asked “which of the following component(s) is part of your firesetter program?” The question was presented in a “select all that apply” format and included “other” as an option with an available text box for a description. A total of 81 respondents answered the question with 11 having skipped for an unknown reason. The juvenile firesetter program components identified were juvenile and family interview 71 (91.4%), fire safety education 70 (86.4%), risk of future fire identification 67 (82.7%), and referral to mental health professionals 61 (75.3%). Eight (9.9%) respondents identified an additional component by selecting “other” and indicated that a follow-up and community service were part of their program. Additional written comments are included in Appendix C.

Question five asked “is training provided for the juvenile firesetter program staff?” The question was a yes or no answer format. A total of 81 respondents answered the question with 11 having skipped for an unknown reason. Results indicate that 63 (77.8%) of the respondents indicate that program staff receive training while the remaining 18 (22.2%) of respondents indicate training is not provided or required.

The personal interviews indicated that Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist I is the minimum training for program staff. G Hunter (personal interview May 12, 2011) was the exception and the only education the program staff receive are general public education classes.

Question six asked “is your juvenile firesetter program part of a larger coalition that addresses fire setting behaviors from a broader perspective?” The question was a yes or no



answer format. It also included a description box to allow respondent who answered yes to identify other coalition members. A total of 81 respondents answered the question with 11 having skipped for an unknown reason. The results indicate 42 (51.9%) of the respondents do not utilize a coalition approach while 39 (48.1%) are part of a juvenile firesetter intervention coalition. Additionally, 21 of the respondents that listed they were part of a coalition provided a listing of coalition members which are included in Appendix C.

The personal interviews all indicated that they were part of a coalition. However, they indicated that after the development phase the coalition members rarely meet which reduces the some of the benefit.

### **Research Question 3 Results**

How can the effectiveness of programs be measured? Pertinent data related to the research question was obtained in questions 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Question seven asked “do you utilize a system to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile firesetter program?” A total of 81 respondents answered the question with 11 having skipped for an unknown reason. The question was a yes or no answer format. The results indicate that over half of the respondents 46 (56.8%) do not have a way to measure the effectiveness of the program while only 35 (43.2%) report a system is in place.

Personal interview results were even more lopsided as only 1 (20%) evaluates the effectiveness of their program. S. Fricke (personal interview May 5, 2011) indicates that follow up with the juvenile and family is completed at 6, 12, 18, and 24 month. However, this is completed by mail or e-mail and the number of participants that respond is low.

Question eight asked “what method(s) of evaluation to you utilize?” The question was presented in a “select all that apply” format and included “other” as an option with and available

text box for a description. A total of 80 respondents answered the question with 12 having skipped for and unknown reason. The most common evaluation method identified by the respondents 50 (62.5%) was a follow-up with participant and family members. Use of statistics on recidivism was identified by 33 (41.3%). Seventeen (21.3%) respondents report using pre and post testing to measure knowledge learned. Additionally, 15 (18.8%) select “other” indicating an evaluation method not provided which is included in Appendix C.

It should be noted that only 35 respondents indicated that an evaluation method was in place in the previous question. However, 80 answered this question which identified the evaluation method used, suggesting that 44 respondents did not understand either question seven or question eight.

Question nine asked “what data collection system do you utilize to track juvenile firesetter data?” A total of 77 respondents answered the question with 15 having skipped for and unknown reason. The question was presented in a short answer format. The results indicate that there is not universal system that is utilized to track this information. The most common answer was a system that was designed by the individual programs. Additional written comments are included in Appendix C.

Question 10 asked “has the data collection system provided easy retrieval of necessary data as well as protecting the confidentiality of participants from personnel other than program staff?” The question was a yes or no answer format with a description box provided to list the data storage software or system for the yes respondents. A total of 76 respondents answered the question with 16 having skipped for and unknown reason. A total of 42 (55.3%) respondents indicated that data system is effective at protecting confidentiality and providing easy data retrieval. The remaining respondents that answered the question 34 (44.7%) indicated that the system utilized either does not protect the confidentiality of the candidate or data is not easy to retrieve or possibly both are true. Of the yes respondents, 20 provided supplemental information identifying the system utilized which is included in

## Appendix C.

The personal interviews had similar results with the 3 (60%) indicating their data storage system that can accomplish both tasks. The most common response was the utilization of Firehouse software and particularly the Arson Module. For those that do not use a software system, they were typically able to protect the confidentiality but not retrieve data easily. J. Maddox (personal interview May 12, 2011) indicated that the data storage system is a binder that is maintained for each participant with the binder residing in a locked filing cabinet.

Question eleven asked “what would you describe as the strength of the program?” A total of 75 respondents answered the question with 17 having skipped for an unknown reason. The question was presented in a short answer format. The strengths most commonly identified were the abilities of program staff and early intervention once a juvenile is identified. Additional written comments are included in Appendix C.

The personal interviews were similar to the questionnaire listing a variety of responses. G. Hunter (personal interview May 5, 2011) identified strength of the program that was not identified by others. He identified the fact that the program is specifically tailored to the needs of the juvenile.

Question 12 asked “what would you describe as the weakness of the program?” A total of 75 respondents answered the question with 17 having skipped for an unknown reason. The question was presented in a short answer format. The most common weaknesses respondents identified were failure to follow up on participants, lack of training for program staff, and funding.

The personal interviews were all in agreement regarding the weakness of the program. All of them identified that lack of follow-up with the participants.

### **Discussion**

The literature indicates that program development should begin with a community risk

assessment. Specifically, the literature stated “One of the mistakes made in program development is to create one based upon perceived need. This approach can be costly in terms of misdirected resources, continued property loss, injuries and death” (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2008, p. 1). The research indicates that 66% of the questionnaire respondents developed their juvenile firesetter program based upon occurrences in their community. This number is lower than desirable as it indicates that the program may have not been necessary for some communities or, at least, is a risk that had not been recognized. Twenty-three percent indicate that national trends of juvenile fires were the reasons for program development. There may be merit in this approach as all communities change over time and juvenile firesetter issues nationally may be an indicator of future risk for a community. This is more of a proactive approach and will allow an organization to have a program in place prior to the risk being apparent. However, this proactive approach cannot be to the detriment of other risks currently evident in a given community which are left unaddressed.

Personal interviews of local departments were more in line with the USFA recommendations as 80% were developed based upon current community risk. Some of these programs have been in place since the 1990’s which indicates that it is not a new risk.

The literature provided several models that can be utilized to assist with program development. The development model can be specific to the community or the problem. It is not even required that one specific program model be utilized. Pieces of various models or steps may even allow a more balanced approach. What is critical is that the approach evaluates the needs and implements a program that will put steps in place to address the issue.

The research indicates that there were two main program development models that were utilized by the respondents. Research of other firesetter programs was the most common reply as

65% of questionnaire respondents and 100% personal interviews selected this response. The key factor that must be analyzed when utilizing this approach is to ensure that the programs being used as a model are measuring their effectiveness with positive results. Failing to ensure this fact may result in a failed program model.

FEMA's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook was the second most selected response as 61% of the questionnaire respondents indicated utilizing this tool. This approach may have less risk as the coalition that was involved in the development of this book had expertise in many aspects of juvenile fires and provide a well-rounded approach.

The literature indicates that, at a minimum, a juvenile firesetter program should include components that identify juveniles in need of firesetting interventions, include interviews with the juvenile and family, future fire risk determination, fire safety education, and a mental health referral in some cases (Gaynor, 2002). The terminology used to identify these components can vary as well as the actual forms used. Additionally, the literature indicates that the proactive approach of providing fire education to stakeholders such as parents, caregivers and school teachers will assist in fire setting behaviors being recognized. This can include fire safety education for juveniles prior to the occurrence of a fire setting event. That may be most easily accomplished by teaching fire safety in the schools (Lombardi, 2009).

The research indicates that the juvenile firesetter components utilized by the questionnaire and personal interview respondents are consistent with the ones identified in the literature review. They include identification, interviews, future fire risk determination, fire safety education and mental health referral. Only 9% of respondents utilize any other components which included community service work and take home projects.

The literature indicates that all programs, whether new or ongoing, must have a method

to evaluate the effectiveness in place (Shackman, 1998). The three basic evaluation methods described in the literature included goal based, process based, and outcome based. Goal based answers questions related to how the goals were established and how effective has the program has been in reaching them. Process based assessment focuses on how the program works. It answers questions related to what is required to provide the program. Outcome based evaluation is designed to measure the program's ability to achieve specific results. It focuses on the measuring the changes in behaviors, knowledge, perception, attitude or skills of the participants (McNamara, 2011).

The literature also indicated that in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a juvenile firesetter program the ability to measure the impact on the juvenile's completing the program must be accomplished. The literature indicates that the best way to accomplish this task is through follow up contacts. The format for these contacts are not specified but the importance of this activity is reiterated (Gaynor, 2002).

The research indicates that program evaluation is not occurring as frequently as desirable. Of the questionnaire respondents 56% indicate that a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the program was not in place. This contrast was even greater in the personal interview of local departments as 80% do not evaluate the effectiveness. The one respondent who does complete a follow up activity with program participants relies on mail and e-mail to accomplish this task but indicate that response rate is very low.

This is concerning as it indicates that respondents are simply assuming the program is accomplishing the program goals but are unable to verify these results. Some of the respondents indicate that the lack of past program participants returning to the program due to firesetting events, is an effectiveness measure. While this may be an indication that the program is

effective, there are too many variable this approach does not address. Are parents simply failing to report additional fire setting behaviors, is it simply a matter of the juvenile being more discrete with fire setting activities, or have the fires simply not been large enough to be recognized?

The idea of assuming that a juvenile firesetting intervention program is effective in reducing fire setting behaviors without the ability to demonstrate this result is flawed. The majority of these programs were put in place to address current risk in their community. Not committing the time and resources necessary to evaluation the programs ability to reduce this risk is a process flaw.

The literature review provided information beyond the basic components of a juvenile firesetter program. It illuminated the need to identify the educational material that will be utilized for firesetters of various ages. It also clarified the importance of completing a follow up with participants to determine program areas that need to be improved and the ones that are effective. While the information obtained from the questionnaire and interviews are not without limitations, it produced useful results and supported information found during the literature review. It is apparent that the Lenexa Fire Department would benefit from evaluating the current practices used for juvenile firesetter interventions. Information gained from the literature review and the research results will provide a framework for this evaluation and any implemented changes. The research project has helped the author better understand program development procedures, juvenile firesetter program components, and program evaluation methods. This project should produce favorable results for the LFD.

### **Recommendations**

The purpose of this applied research paper is to identify elements of juvenile firesetter programs that will provide the LFD a structured approach to ensure effectiveness. Several of

the practices used by the LFD are consistent with the literature and research findings. However, the LFD should consider several recommendations to enhance the ability to provide an effective juvenile firesetter program.

It is recommended that the LFD research educational resources to determine resources or tools that are appropriate and beneficial for various age groups. The literature indicates the age appropriateness of various topics but not specific resources. The general fire education material that the LFD possess; home exit drills procedures, smoke detector benefits, stop drop and roll information, and in home safety dangers may be beneficial for some age groups. But the LFD has a relatively small selection of educational resources that are specific to firesetting intervention. Research to determine available resources are required and funds will be necessary to acquire the identified materials.

Research is also required to determine what resources Social Rehabilitation Services (SRS) can provide juveniles that are in need of professional mental health counseling. If the resources and abilities are appropriate for juvenile firesetters, a referral method should be identified. This should include hours of operation, locations, and ability to provide feedback to the LFD regarding participants. If SRS is unable to provide the necessary services, research to find appropriate mental health professionals is recommended.

It is recommended that the LFD provide training opportunities for juvenile firesetter program staff. The literature indicates that a trained interviewer who follows the interview process will have a greater ability to accurately identify the risk of future fire setting behaviors. Additionally, juvenile firesetting matters are sensitive issues and typically require the entire family to participate and frequently the involvement is voluntary. Training will assist program staff in being prepared to deal with these situations. The research identified numerous programs



that are available to accomplish this task. Additional research to identify the ones most appropriate for LFD personnel must be conducted. The research should include identification of resources with minimal impact on the department's budget. One such example is the Juvenile Intervention Specialist I & II classes offered at the National Fire Academy.

It is recommended that LFD evaluate the ability of Firehouse software for tracking juvenile firesetter information. Firehouse is the software currently used by the LFD for incident reporting and the ability to utilize this same software for the juvenile firesetter program would be advantageous and cost effective. One key characteristic required will be the ability to store information and secure juvenile information from all but program staff. The software also needs to have the ability to provide for easy data retrieval. If Firehouse cannot provide this functionality, a data storage system that meets these objectives must be identified. Some of the research indicates that building databases in software systems such as Excel have been successful in achieving these results. The City's Information Technologies Department may have information on the best approach and consulting with them is advised.

The development and implementation of participant follow-up procedure is recommended. The literature indicates the only way to accurately evaluate a juvenile firesetter intervention program is to complete a follow up with the participants. The format for the follow up as well as the information that is tracked should be identified by program staff. At a minimum contact with participants six months after program completion is necessary. This will provide, at least, a basic understanding about the short-term impact of the program.

The development of a Standard Practice Guidelines (SPG) document is recommended. The juvenile firesetter program should have the same level of documentation and training as any education program provided by the LFD and, as such, a SPG document is required. A SPG

document is an important program step as it provides understanding of the program to department personnel and is a brief operating manual for program staff. It should include information that should be gathered by LFD personnel when juvenile firesetters are identified during incident response, identify program staff, education resources utilized, and program procedures.

The development of a program that focuses on the dangers of juvenile fires is recommended. This program can be a resource that identifies the frequency of juvenile firesetting events nationally as well the injury, death and dollar loss impact. It can be used as a pre-incident educational tool that is designed to provide information to parents and school staff. The approach would be to reduce firesetting occurrences by informing these key individuals on the frequency of the problem, characteristic of juveniles most at risk for fire setting behaviors, and warning signs. Current LFD public education programs that teach fire safety to kindergarten through sixth grade at all schools in Lenexa are a great start. But a program that helps parents and school staff recognize dangerous behaviors is critical.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Form

Date: May 5, 2011

Name: Gene Hunter

Organization: Leawood Kansas Fire Department

Title: Fire Marshall

1. What was the basis for the development of a juvenile firesetter program in your department?

The national problem of juvenile fires.

2. What program development steps or model(s) were utilized to develop the juvenile firesetter program?

We researched other department's firesetter programs.

3. How are juveniles firesetters identified in your program?

There is really only two ways juveniles come to our program; parents and the court system..

4. What components are parts of your firesetter program?

Juvenile / family interview, risk identification, fire safety education, and referral to mental health when appropriate. However the need for referral is fairly rare.

5. Is training provided for the Juvenile Firesetter Program staff?

Yes, general fire prevention classes.

6. Is your Juvenile Firesetter Program part of a larger coalition that addresses fire setting behaviors from a broad perspective? If yes, what are the benefits?

No

7. Do you utilize a system to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile firesetter program?

No.

8. What data collection system do you utilized to track juvenile firesetter data?

We keep an individual binder on all participants for five years.

9. Does the data collection system provided easy retrieval of necessary data as well as protecting the confidentiality of participants from personnel other than program staff?

The confidentiality of the participants is protected and the information can be retrieved but it is not an easy process.

10. Has the juvenile fire program been effective in reducing juvenile firestting behaviors?

We believe it is but don't really have a way to validate that belief. .

11. What would you describe as the strength of your program?

We are responsive to the needs of the participant and their family and will tailor the program to meet their needs.

12. What would you describe as the weakness of your program?

Lack of specialized training in juvenile firestter information.

#### Personal Interview

Date: May 5, 2011

Name: John Maddox

Organization: Shawnee Kansas Fire Department

Title: Fire Marshall

9. What was the basis for the development of a juvenile firesetter program in your department?

Juvenile fire events in our jurisdiction.

10. What program development steps or model(s) were utilized to develop the juvenile firestter program?

We researched other department's firesetter programs.

11. How are juveniles firesetters identified in your program?

By parents, law enforcement, courts and department personnel.

12. What components are parts of your firesetter program?

Juvenile / family interview, risk identification, fire safety education, and referral to mental health when appropriate.

13. Is training provided for the Juvenile Firesetter Program staff?

Yes, JFIS I

14. Is your Juvenile Firesetter Program part of a larger coalition that addresses fire setting behaviors from a broad perspective? If yes, what are the benefits?

Yes, the ability to share information between jurisdictions particularly when the juvenile lives in one jurisdiction but attends school in another.

15. Do you utilize a system to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile firesetter program?

No. We occasionally receive reports from parents letting us know how the education assisted their child but we do not proactively seek this information.

16. What data collection system do you utilize to track juvenile firesetter data?

The arson module of Firehouse software; it allows for easy retrieval of information but also protects the confidentiality of the juvenile. We also compile information on an excel spreadsheet as well as scan the file to a disk and store in a locked cabinet.

9. Does the data collection system provided easy retrieval of necessary data as well as protecting the confidentiality of participants from personnel other than program staff?

Not really, we keep records in file folders so the information is protected but easy retrieval of information is not possible.

13. Has the juvenile fire program been effective in reducing juvenile fire setting behaviors?

Yes, we haven't had any repeat participants in our program.

14. What would you describe as the strength of your program?

Our program personnel and their abilities. .

15. What would you describe as the weakness of your program?

Lack of follow-up and local tracking.

Personal Interview

Date: May 5, 2011

Name: Rick Mosher

Organization: Merriam Kansas Fire Department

Title: Lieutenant

1. What was the basis for the development of a juvenile firesetter program in your department?

Local firesetting problem.

2. What program development steps or model(s) were utilized to develop the juvenile firesetter program?

We researched other department's firesetter programs.

3. How are juveniles firesetters identified in your program?

By parents, court system and our department personnel during incident response.

4. What components are parts of your firesetter program?

Juvenile / family interview, risk identification, fire safety education, and referral to mental health. We also require all participants to complete a project about what they have learned and present it to their family and program personnel.

5. Is training provided for the Juvenile Firesetter Program staff?

Yes, JFIS I & II

6. Is your Juvenile Firesetter Program part of a larger coalition that addresses fire setting behaviors from a broad perspective? If yes, what are the benefits?

Yes. Funding and a set curriculum.

7. Do you utilize a system to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile firesetter program?



No.

8. What data collection system do you utilized to track juvenile firesetter data?

We use Firehouse software.

9. Does the data collection system provided easy retrieval of necessary data as well as protecting the confidentiality of participants from personnel other than program staff?

Data retrieval would be easy but all department personnel are able to see the information.

10. Has the juvenile firesetter program been effective in reducing juvenile firestting behaviors?

Based upon recidivism rates I would say that is has been successful.

11. What would you describe as the strength of your program?

The education provided which focuses on consequences and liability. I would also say the mental health referral is strength.

12. What would you describe as the weakness of your program?

Lack of follow-up on participants.

### Personal Interview

Date: May 5, 2011

Name: Sharon Fricke

Organization: Olathe Fire Department

Title: Public Education Specialist

1. What was the basis for the development of a juvenile firesetter program in your department?

In the early 1990's we recognized that juvenile firestting was an issue in our city and believed it was a service we needed to provide.

2. What program development steps or model(s) were utilized to develop the juvenile

firestter program?

There was significant discussion on what the program should look like, but ultimately we researched what others departments were doing to develop ours.

3. How are juveniles firesetters identified in your program?

They are identified a number of ways- parents, schools, courts, police and fire department personnel.

4. What components are parts of your firesetter program?

Juvenile / family interview, risk identification, fire safety education, and referral to mental health when appropriate.

5. Is training provided for the Juvenile Firestter Program staff?

Yes, JFIS I & II.

6. Is your Juvenile Firesetter Program part of a larger coalition that addresses fire setting behaviors from a broad perspective? If yes, what are the benefits?

Yes, the main benefits are exchange of ideas and input on how to handle difficult cases.

7. Do you utilize a system to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile firesetter program?

We complete a follow-up at 6, 12, 18, and 24 months through mail or e-mail. For those that complete the follow-up we have a good feel for how the program is performing.

8. What data collection system do you utilized to track juvenile firesetter data?

The arson module of Firehouse software; it allows for easy retrieval of information but also protects the confidentiality of the juvenile. We also compile information on an excel spreadsheet as well as scan the file to a disk and store in a locked cabinet.

9. Does the data collection system provided easy retrieval of necessary data as well as protecting the confidentiality of participants from personnel other than program staff?

Yes

9. Has the juvenile fire program been effective in reducing juvenile firestting behaviors?

Yes, according to the follow-up reports that are completed.

10. What would you describe as the strength of your program?

The training of the program staff and the coalition approach provides resources for referrals when necessary.

11. What would you describe as the weakness of your program?

Since all participants don't complete the follow-up information we are not able to measure the effectiveness of the program on all participants.

### Personal Interview

Date: May 5, 2011

Name: Tricia Roberts

Organization: Overland Park Fire Department

Title: Public Education Specialist

1. What was the basis for the development of a juvenile firesetter program in your department?

It was developed due to fire juvenile fire occurrences in our City.

2. What program development steps or model(s) were utilized to develop the juvenile firestter program?

We followed the Fire Stoppers program.

3. How are juveniles firesetters identified in your program?

They are identified a number of ways- parents, schools, courts, police and fire department personnel.

4. What components are parts of your firesetter program?

Juvenile / family interview, risk identification, fire safety education, and referral to mental health when appropriate.

5. Is training provided for the Juvenile Firestter Program staff?

JFIS I is the minimum training requirement. Some of the staff is also trained at JFIS II.

6. Is your Juvenile Firesetter Program part of a larger coalition that addresses fire setting behaviors from a broad perspective? If yes, what are the benefits?

Yes, the benefit is the specialized knowledge and experience each group is able to provide.

7. Do you utilize a system to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile firesetter program?

Not really- we complete an exit interview with all of the participants to determine what they have learned. But we don't follow-up with them after at a later date.

8. What data collection system do you utilized to track juvenile firesetter data?

We create an incident report in Firehouse software.

9. Does the data collection system provided easy retrieval of necessary data as well as protecting the confidentiality of participants from personnel other than program staff?

It great for data retrieval but the information is not protected from other department personnel.

10. Has the juvenile fire program been effective in reducing juvenile fire setting behaviors?

Not sure we can honestly answer that question but we are not seeing the same juveniles come through our program.

11. What would you describe as the strength of your program?

The fire safety education, specifically our focus on consequences of actions.

12. What would you describe as the weakness of your program?

We need to implement a follow-up component in our program.

Appendix B

Dear Fire Service Professionals,

I am a second year student in the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program and am requesting your assistance in completing a questionnaire. The information gained will be used as part of the applied research component of the program. I am conducting this research to identify Juvenile Firesetter Program components and how the effectiveness of the program is measured.

If someone other than you is responsible for this program, I would request that this e-mail be forwarded to them. The Survey has 12 questions and should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. The responses to the questions are anonymous.

The questionnaire can be located by clicking on the link provided:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EACRR>

If you would like to have the results of this questionnaire please reply to this e-mail and I will forward the findings once tabulated.

Thank you for participating in this research project. If you would like to reach me I can be contacted by e-mail at [smyrtle@ci.lenexa.ks.us](mailto:smyrtle@ci.lenexa.ks.us) or by phone at (913) 888-6380. Again, I appreciate your responses and look forward to reviewing the results.

Fire Captain Stan Myrtle | Lenexa Fire Department | 9620 Pflumm Road | Lenexa, Kansas 66215  
| Office: 913-888-6380 |

**Appendix C**

What was the basis for the development of a juvenile firesetter program in your department?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
National trends on juvenile fires	23.9%	22
Juvenile fire occurrences in your jurisdiction	66.3%	61
Other (please describe)	9.8%	9
<i>answered question</i>		<b>92</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Date</b>	<b>Other (please describe)</b>
1	No current SOG for JFS. No direction or responsibility to help on-scene officers in dealing with JFS.	
2	We do not have a juvenile firesetter program.	
3	We do not have one on this installation. No base housing	
4	Program availability via our local Fire Prevention Officer's Association	
5	We don't have very many fires set by Juvenile's but when they do we needed a program to follow.	
6	Do not have a program.	
7	Discontinued our Community risk division moving all inspectors and public educators back to fire engines and ambulances.	
8	No program	
9	Juvenile firesetters program is run by the county.	

<b>(Select all that apply) What program development steps or model(s) were utilized to develop the juvenile firesetter program?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Research of other firesetter programs	65.9%	54
Utilization of a logic model	9.8%	8
Model used in other programs in your department	13.4%	11
FEMA's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook	61.0%	50
Other (please describe)	14.6%	12
<i>answered question</i>		<b>82</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>10</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Date</b>	
1	Personal experience  Psychological studies	
2	USFA JFS Specialist I & II	
3	Similar to Orange County Fire starter's	
4	Texas State Fire Marshal's Office Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program	
5	Not applicable.	
6	Inclusion of the State Mental Health professionals to provide family intervention for those scoring high enough on the weighted interview forms.	
7	Modeled after a program put together in King County and Pierce County WA. That was influenced heavily by a program in Portland OR that was pioneered by Don Porth, know pretty renown for his work in this field.	
8	Had a juvenile program-discontinued.	
9	State of Delaware Juvenile Firesetters Program	
10	Illinois Fire Safety Alliance helped develop a state certification for Illinois	
11	State of Colorado has a JFS program format.	
12	No formal program	

<b>(Select all that apply) How are juvenile firesetters identified?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Parents	79.3%	65
Schools	65.9%	54
Law enforcement	79.3%	65
Departments of justice'	34.1%	28
Fire department personnel	89.0%	73
Other (please specify)	18.3%	15
<i>answered question</i>		<b>82</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>10</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Date</b>	
1	PINS, Probation	
2	mental health	
3	All of the above can recommend a juvenile to participate in our program.	
4	Neighborhood watch	
5	Mental Health referrals, Social Services Referrals.	
6	Mental Health Professionals, Local Burn Hospital	
7	Witnesses and on occasion, surveillance cameras.	
8	Mental Health/Social Services referrals	
9	Our Fire Investigators respond to ALL fires involving juveniles and work with the Juv DA to determine whether the program or criminal court would be the best avenue.	
10	Also from neighbors, family friends, and other relatives like grandparents- that often have a hand in raising grandchildren these days.	
11	court referral	
12	Residential Treatment centers	
13	Some mental health referral and Children's Court referral	
14	Referrals from Children's Hospital, located in Aurora, CO.	
15	None identified	



<b>(Select all that apply) Which of the following components is part of your firesetter program?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Juvenile and family interview	91.4%	74
Identifying the juvenile's risk level for continued fire activities	82.7%	67
Education	86.4%	70
Referral of appropriate candidates to a mental health professional	75.3%	61
Other (please describe)	9.9%	8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>81</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>11</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Date</b>	
1	Our program consists of all of the above.	
2	Community service  Homework assignments and projects	
3	Have no program.	
4	One-on-one intervention & education session with the family, which takes about 2 hours. Take home activities for the youth. A 6-month phone call follow-up. A secondary visit for additional education is encouraged, but not commonly followed through with parents. Demographics and statistics indicate a 90% + risk level of "curiosity" for children attending the program.	
5	The Juv DA may accept Arson charges on a juvenile however, he/she may be ordered to complete our program as part of sentencing up to one year later.	
6	Follow-up and evaluation	
7	Municipal court system. Families who have received summons for children experimented with fire are required to participate in the Fire Department JFS Program.	
8	No formal program	

Is training provided for the Juvenile Firestter Program staff?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	77.8%	63
No	22.2%	18
<i>answered question</i>		<b>81</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>11</b>

Is your Juvenile Firesetter Program part of a larger coalition that addresses fire setting behaviors from a broad perspective?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	48.1%	39
No	51.9%	42
(If yes, please list the other participating agencies)		22
<i>answered question</i>		<b>81</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>11</b>
Number	Response Date	
1	Our coalition serves 7 counties and was the model program promoted by the state fire marshal's office.	
2	All of Orange County, CA participates so there are other agencies within the County. Other agencies have access to the website.	
3	JFS Coalition	
4	County Probation and Courts	
5	Over 20 different municipalities Countywide channel candidates through one central program	
6	Have no program.	
7	Law enforcement agencies  Juvenile District Attorneys  Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC office)	
8	Our program is "metro-wide" made up of multiple fire departments, mental health professionals, and ACOG (Association of Central Oklahoma Governments)	
9	Snohomish County Fire Prevention Association is the lead agency and makes it available to all departments in the county. Generally the larger departments (with dedicated fire pervation staff) participate and smaller ones do not.	
10	Kitsap Mental Health  Kitsap County Sheriff's Office  Mary Bridge Children's Center (Medical Center)	

11	It was part of a regional program.
12	Juvenile court system
13	Jo Co Fire Departments, SRS, Jo Co Health Dept, LE Agencies,
14	We have been part of a county-wide coalition developed over 15 years ago, but this coalition goes from active to inactive based upon program participants.
15	We have to obtain a case number and a form from IFSA and return it to them. They keep track of the information
16	Law enforcement, juvenile justice system, other fire departments within the county.
17	Straight Talk Program University of Louisville Hospital  Juvenile Court  Bingham Child Guidance Center
18	Central Ohio Juvenile Fire Setter Educators Association
19	Central Ohio Juvenile Firesetter Educators
20	Law enforcement and the education classes are taught at a State of MN prison that is located in our county. We take the educational approach but also emphasize the criminal aspect if they continue down the wrong path
21	Florida Fire Marshals Assc
22	School District

Do you utilize a system to determine the effectiveness of the juvenile firesetter program?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	43.2%	35
No	56.8%	46
<i>answered question</i>		<b>81</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>11</b>

<b>(Select all that apply) What method(s) of evaluation do you utilize?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Follow-up with participants/family	62.5%	50
Pre and post test to measure knowledge increase	21.3%	17
Recidivism statistics	41.3%	33
Other (please describe)	18.8%	15
<i>answered question</i>		<b>80</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>12</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Date</b>	
1	None	
2	No follow up	
3	No evaluation process is in place at this time. No JFS processed through the system since it was created.	
4	none	
5	I do not know how we evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions.	
6	Have no program.	
7	Program canceled	
8	none	
9	Participant (parent) evaluation of the program components and staff.	
10	NA	
11	None at this time.	
12	n/a	
13	No formal program	
14	None	
15	none	

What data collection system do you utilized to track juvenile firesetter data?		
Answer Options	Answer Options	Response Count
		77
<i>answered question</i>	77	77
	<i>skipped question</i>	15
Number	Response	
1	Predetermined interview sheets	
2	File Maker Pro	
3	Fire House reports generated by both the fire companies and fire investigators.	
4	access	
5	Statistical form that is entered into spreadsheet database.	
6	Internal referrals	
7	None	
8	juvenile arrest reports	
9	None, FireHouse Software is used throughout the department but a tracking parameter added to FH reports has not been added at this time.	
10	Currently all data collection is through the juducal system.	
11	In take forms Risk Assessment Questionairre Follow up interview forms	
12	In house program. City IT will not allow us to use national programs like SOS fires ect.	
13	It was through the King County Fire Stopper Program, but the county lost funding for this program.	
14	We keep the data in our Sunpro system, as well as a hard copy of additional information.	
15	Microsoft Access Database	
16	surveys	
17	NFIRS	
18	Unknown system utilized by the SD Burn Center	
19	FireManager	
20	We go threw the burn institute	
21	Internal Reporting System	

22	We track them in a homemade database.
23	In house
24	Form based month-end stats. Tracked manually.
25	Data base hosted on the secure website
26	FireRMS
27	none
28	None
29	In house RMS.
30	None
31	none. Our Public Education program was unfunded
32	none,we currently do not have an active program
33	Track with our Firehouse software
34	in house, fire department determination of fire causes
35	Florida Statewide Database
36	Individual case files.
37	Unknown
38	Typical NFIRS data for incident reporting.
39	n/a
40	Access DataBase as well as Fire Manager, which is our operations fire reporting system
41	Firehouse Software and software through the Police Department (Pin Mapping)
42	Zoll's RMS System
43	Juvenile cases are tracked and monitored using a computer software program and spread sheets.
44	home-made data base is used to collect county-wide demographic data, and to store juvenile specific data that can be shared between agencies.
45	Electronic RMS
46	police records, court referrals
47	In-House tracking system
48	Fire FRIENDS data base
49	Unkonwn
50	monthly reports
51	internal records management system
52	FireHouse (arson module) and own spreadsheet
53	unknown
54	none
55	Currently a manual system.

56	IFSA collects the data we submit to them
57	NFIRS, Arson/Court records, Computer aided tracking of all records
58	Standardized assessment and/or interview forms. Data is not compiled nor utilized in any way aside from assessment purposes
59	NA
60	State-wide database
61	ACES
62	survey tool
63	n/a
64	NFIRS
65	Maintain individual files on juveniles
66	Files kept on-site.
67	Names are tracked in Excel and for those families that received a summons the court system tracks names.
68	I'm not sure, I do not handle the data system.
69	None
70	Records Management System
71	None
72	Our own
73	none
74	repeat incidents
75	none
76	Investigation stats
77	none at this time

Has the data collection system provided easy retrieval of necessary data as well as protecting the confidentiality of participants from personnel other than program staff?			
Answer Options		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		55.3%	42
No		44.7%	34
If Yes, please describe how it is measured			22
<i>answered question</i>			<b>76</b>
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>16</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>If Yes, please describe how it is measured</b>		
1	Hard copies kept in a locked file cabinet.		
2	Can gather age gender area and protect the confidentiality of the juvenile and family		
3	N/A		

4	This information was sent to one person from the participating departments and then evaluated so we could measure the program effectiveness in our county.
5	We can request information from the Burn center but they will give pertinent info without disclosing sensitive information about the juvenile
6	A database system was recommended but not utilized.
7	BSOFD provides primary oversight of the data collection system. Fire investigators can access information regarding cases that involved incidents that occurred in their jurisdiction.
8	I have no idea on how to retrieve that information.
9	Do not recall any specific data search, but should be as easy as any other search.
10	Originally, data was collected in Fire Manager but was difficult or impossible to extract certain fields we desired to gather statistics.  The JFS Access DataBase confidentially tracks all pertinent information for identification of the juvenile, family and incident as well as additional details collected during the intervention/education, such type of ignition source used, what was lit on fire, where the fire occurred, risk factors for the juvenile, etc.
11	Our PD measures it
12	Through Crystal reporting
13	Demographics are measured, such as ages, locations, and numbers of participants. Participant info is kept confidential but can be released to other agencies directly involved with the participant with a signed release.
14	The Fire Investigators referring the juveniles to the program do not have access to the case information unless criminal charges are pursued.
15	Since this system was developed in-house it is easy for the Public Information Specialist to track the data that has been entered. Also, only those in our Public Safety Division have access to this information.
16	The Arson Module in FireHouse is locked down. Only authorized personnel are able to view and review.
17	It does protect confidentiality but data is not utilized otherwise.
18	password protection allows for data to be seen only by those who are authorized.
19	Confidential NFIRS reporting statistics
20	Access to the database records are password protected.
21	On the staff who participate in the program have access to the database and they give us yearly statistics. We have a county wide approach.
22	na



What would you describe as the strength of your program?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	75
<i>answered question</i>	<b>75</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>17</b>
Number	Response Date
1	Involved counselors, experience
2	community involvement and follow up
3	The support provided by the City of Tulsa as well as the Tulsa Fire Department.
4	Education
5	It is dynamic - regular program effectiveness review. Quarterly coalition meetings and networking
6	Medium
7	Not much, we need to improve greatly but we do have good cooperation from the police department.
8	moderate
9	N/A
10	Working partnerships with other agencies
11	Civilian educators manage and teach the program. They work directly with the schools, social service agencies and other city agencies to address JFS cases. The program is comprised of both an intervention and a proactive education program that is delivered to local schools.
12	Program availability and flexibility
13	The networking that takes place between educators. When a department needs assistance or someone needs training, we share in help each other in these areas.
14	Once an individual has been identified as needing JFS counseling, we quickly act to make the service accessible. This is our strength.
15	The commitment of the personnel delivering the program.
16	not evaluated, we don't have a major juvenile problem in my area.
17	Participation of those in the program.
18	average
19	Data Information and the referral process
20	Using out side agency has allowed us to provide better service

21	Regularity and dedication to helping kids by the Investigators who sign them into the program..
22	It is only an early intervention tool. It does not provide long-term care.
23	Early intervention
24	Interviewing and placement into education program.
25	Awareness that the program exists within the county. Excellent curriculum.
26	bc
27	Sincerity in delivery of the education portion
28	Easily deployed and readily available to refer candidates to
29	Weak
30	We have never had a repeat offender.
31	none
32	we currently do not have an active program, where we report to the State Database
33	Like most of these programs; early intervention to prevent unwanted fires.
34	average. We have had only a few juveniles to get involved with fire once they have been through the program that we are aware of
35	The passion and commitment of the fire safety educators who oversee the program and provide training for candidates and their families.
36	Weak - in the building process
37	It is tailored to the individual(s) involved.
38	Have no program.
39	The ability to conduct one-on-one interventions with each family, as opposed to having families wait for a monthly intervention/education class held for a group of youth and parents.  Also, the Intake process by line firefighters and investigators to submit contact information to the JFS Team in a timely & confidential manner.
40	Moderate.
41	Cooperation with the Youth Justice Initiative program that our Police Dept developed
42	Early intervention.
43	All departments involved receive the same training and utilize the same forms and format to ensure consistency and accuracy. families determined to need additional assistance are referred to State mental health professionals for counselling.

44	Broad county-wide multi-jurisdictional approach based on a well-respected program put together by a coalition of providers in King/Pierce Counties in WA.
45	Regional approach delivering a higher level of resources and services.
46	one on one education
47	Our willingness to participate in this program and partner with other agencies for those cases that are beyond our expertise.
48	excellent
49	Canceled
50	Comprehensive
51	Early Intervention
52	The program instructors
53	na
54	Our instructors/educators
55	The network of contacts. If you have any questions or need help, they are willing to get what you need
56	The coalition based approach and Mental health referral system for children identified as needing further intervention.
57	Moderate. We do a very good job internally. There is minimal interaction with outside agencies, practically no follow-up with clients, and no system in place to measure overall performance or outcome based objectives.
58	NA
59	collaboration between agencies
60	Dedication by the the educators
61	High quality, very professional
62	n/a
63	Straight Talk Program supervised by University of Louisville Hospital Burn Unit personnel
64	At one time, Westerville was the trend setters for the central Ohio area. Our Juveniles fires have dropped in numbers and we currently do not see as many children playing with fire.
65	Commitment of the two JFS Interventionist.
66	As I already mentioned, the county wide approach and if a Juv moves from one town to another in our town...that new jurisdiction is involved and notified.
67	None
68	Fire setting is an entire family issue, include them all in one way or another.
69	Very Poor

70	The personnel
71	poor
72	Weak at the moment
73	none
74	Good, it is regional between 7 agencies.
75	Quick access

What would you describe as the weakness of your program?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	75
<i>answered question</i>	75
<i>skipped question</i>	17
Number	Response Date
1	Education, long-term tracking.
2	Need more trained personnel
3	The general public's lack of knowledge of the programs existence.
4	Facilitating due to budget
5	Getting documentation to person who keeps records and statistics.
6	Training and limited number of juvenile fire setters.
7	No follow up after initial contact and no data tracking.
8	moderate
9	Inability to track JFS, intervention, and trained JFS specialist to continue the current program.
10	Lack of events to create better evaluators
11	Lack of support, guidance and leadership from management.
12	Program Data tracking
13	Funding has always been an issue for our county. We use to pay for part of the refers to mental health, but each department must now refer and pick up some of the cost or hope that the family will follow through in seeking further help.
14	The weakness of our program is probably that if the parents do not feel it is important, we have little ability to deliver the JFS counseling to the children. We would likely benefit from an integration of services with the Police Dept, School Board, etc to ensure that our valuable services are made accessible where they will matter most.
15	Lack of long term follow-up.
16	na
17	When ordered by the court, there sometimes is a problem in attendance as it is not clearly explained by the judicial system.

18	It is not inhouse and info is more difficult to obtain about the juvenile when violations repeat themselves
19	Evaluating Outcomes
20	none
21	No training and program video and interviews are directed more toward accidental fires than malicious fires..
22	Lack of follow-up to determine if the intervention is effective.
23	The county has begun to decrease staff in this area.
24	Lack of qualified people to follow-up and interview.
25	Lack of participation from offenders. Some feel there is too much paperwork
26	bc
27	Lack of participants (staff), training and education.
28	Lack of opportunities to engage youth into the program
29	Follow up and statistical data.
30	Never the same person in charge because it is used so little.
31	It was unfunded
32	Did not get the training and support needed to continue.
33	Like most reports, we deal constantly with making sure everyting is documented correctly.
34	Not enough juveniles are repoted to participate in the program
35	Reliable year-to-year funding.
36	Very new program to the department.
37	Inability to track effectiveness and data.
38	Parents agree to the program once they realize their child won't be arrested however, they miss scheduled intervention sessions and there's no recourse. DHS considers it neglect but it is a low priority.
39	Have no program.
40	The ability to dedicate time & resources to conduct a "mandatory" secondary class for all families to spend more time educating. Most families are drained by the end of the initial 2 hour session, so having a follow-up session would be a great way to focus on the education portion more.
41	Follow-up
42	Not enough FD staffing to devote someone to this sole responsibility
43	It is easy for kids to fall through the cracks if you don't have a person dedicated to making the program a priority. We don't have a clear leader of the program since this is a multi-jurisdictional effort.
44	Due to budget we are short on personnel.
45	Feedback to the local level.
46	Only 3 instructors available

47	I'm sure that we don't see all juvenile fire setters. We are dependent upon others to identify those kids at risk.
48	prevention ro getting in front of the juvenile firesetter
49	Canceled
50	Follow-ups are currently done by mail or email. Need to change and do face to face phone calls
51	The need for more staffing
52	Inability to measure success
53	not enough information throughout the rest of dept.
54	Format. often delays getting children into initial sessions due to workload and current program structure.
55	so much paperwork to fill out. would be nice to do it all on computer
56	HEPPA laws that restrict the flow of information on the higher risk children that move for one community to another.
57	Minimal follow-up. Need stronger interaction with courts and mental health professionals.
58	NA
59	firesetter identification, and very little follow up after intervention.
60	Identification
61	none
62	not developed/practiced consistently
63	Fire Dept refers candidates only; we do not have a proactive program in the schools due to shortage of personnel
64	Referrals- It would be nice to know if we are truly seeing a drop in incidents or if they are slipping through the cracks in the system.
65	Funding to expand the program. Updated materials in a Spanish format. Personnel with bilingual skills.
66	It seems that our numbers go from high one year 50-80 cases a year to this year we only have 10....not sure why it fluctuates so much.
67	None
68	Juveniles between the ages of 14 to 17, its a waste of time. You feel like you are speaking to yourself.
69	no oversight
70	The data collection
71	not enough staff, time or resources
72	Current level of training
73	all
74	Follow-up statistics
75	Follow up and track data