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The Home
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TEACHING FIRE PREPAREDNESS TO YOUNG CHILDREN

Children as young as three years old can follow a fire escape plan they have practiced often. Yet, many families don't have detailed escape plans, and those that do usually don't practice them. Practicing a fire escape plan and fire-safe behaviors on a regular basis can mean the difference between life and death.

In creating a plan, you should take the following into consideration:

- Start by drawing a basic diagram of your home, marking all windows and doors, and plan two routes of escape out of each room. Consider various fire scenarios when creating your plan and develop actions for a safe escape. Plan for how each member of your family will get out of the home, including babies and toddlers who may be unable to escape on their own.
- Conduct periodic fire drills in your home. This will help children not to be afraid of what to do in case a real fire happens.
- Keep all exits and stairways clear of objects and toys. It is very easy for someone to trip on these, especially ones on or near stairs.
- Keep your child's bedroom door closed. If a hallway fire occurs, a closed door may help keep the smoke from overpowering your baby or toddler, giving you or firefighters extra time for rescue.
- Teach toddlers not to hide from firefighters. Their uniforms can be scary in times of crisis. Teach children that firefighters are there to help in an emergency.
- Take children for a tour at your local fire station so that they can see a firefighter in full gear.
- Teach your children how to crawl under the smoke to reduce smoke inhalation.
- Teach your children how to touch closed doors with the back of their hands to see if they are hot before opening. If so, instruct them to use an alternate escape route.
- Have a safe meeting place outside the home and teach children never to go back inside.

Practicing fire-safe behaviors and knowing what to do in an emergency can give your family extra seconds to escape.

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Louie Delaware, **The Home Safety Guru™**, president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing & mitigation along with fire, carbon monoxide and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, www.HomeSafetyGuru.com.

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