



KidsFirst – SafetyFirst

**Regina Fire & Protective Services and KidsFirst Regina
A Successful Community-Based Firesafety Partnership
Presented by**

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I. Program Overview

In 2003 Regina Fire & Protective Services formed a partnership with KidsFirst Regina, an organisation which provides support to parents of young children living within the inner-city. Regina Fire & Protective Services targeted young children and their parents living in these neighborhoods as primary audiences for fire and life safety education. Young children playing with matches and lighters had consistently been the leading cause of fires in Regina during the previous nine years. Most were occurring within Regina's inner-city neighborhoods. By working together both organizations could combine and maximize resources, and provide an expanded and more effective firesafety program.

This partnership has been highly successful in meeting its objectives of decreasing unintentional fires and fire-related deaths among its target audiences, and has sustained this success over the past eight years.

II. Formative Evaluation - Planning

Fire data analysis indicated that children were the leading cause of house fires in Regina, 1995 to 2003. Sixty per cent of the city's house fires and most of the child-caused fires were occurring within the inner city. Most of the child-caused fires were caused by children age 3 to 6, who generally found an unattended lighter in the home, took the lighter to their own bedroom, and primarily lit their bed sheets on fire. These children generally lived in homes where one or more parent smoked.

Firesetting intervention strategies were designed in collaboration with KidsFirst staff whose expertise centres on developing and implementing strategies aimed at increasing life quality for their client families.

The process used to determine risk, identify the high risk target audiences as well as detailed statistics and mapping will be provided during the Vision 20\20 Symposium.

The program's objectives were developed as:

Within Regina's Inner City: decrease the number of unintentional house fires; the number of child-caused fires; and the number of fire-related fatalities.

With KidsFirst Staff: Provide training to increase their understanding of the city's fire problem, and their role in positively affecting this problem; and develop fire prevention and survival resources to be used by KidsFirst staff and their client families.

With target families: Empower them to take a proactive role in their own firesafety; change unsafe fire behaviours; increase fire escape knowledge and planning actions; and increase the number of homes with working smoke alarms.

III. Process Evaluation - Implementation

Early in 2004 a working group of members from both organizations began meeting to develop the training workshop, the resources to be used by KidsFirst staff, and the tools to be used by the parents.

To date, seven annual training workshops have been conducted for 73 KidsFirst staff, who then incorporate the firesafety resources into their regular family visits. Visits occur two to three times a week over several years.

Support activities were then designed to motivate both the KidsFirst staff and their client families to use the firesafety resources. These activities include contests for the children, an annual firesafety carnival and picnic held at a fire station, and regular presentations by fire department staff to parents.

The final implementation piece was development of a KidsFirst Firesafety Curriculum, developed jointly by Regina Fire & Protective Services and KidsFirst Regina. The Curriculum provides the guideline for work expected to be completed between the staff and their clients.

IV. Impact Evaluation – Short Term Results

Annual fire data analysis is used to determine whether the program objectives are being met. In addition, training evaluations and evaluation forms to rate and critique the firesafety resources have been implemented, and regular evaluation meetings are held with the KidsFirst staff.

Surveys designed to evaluate firesafety knowledge, attitudes and actions are completed by families attending KidsFirst firesafety events. These are compared with data from the general population. The program is a regular part of the work carried out by KidsFirst staff. Their clients have demonstrated – and continue to demonstrate – that the firesafety knowledge and behaviors have been transferred to them by the KidsFirst staff, as evidenced by the evaluation tools.

V. Outcome Evaluation – Long Term Results

The fire losses attributed to the target audiences for this program have decreased consistently since program implementation. In 2003, there were 43 house fires in Regina caused by young children playing with matches or lighters. Two thirds of these fires occurred in the program's target area. In 2010 there was one child-caused fire in the program's target area (the only child-caused fire city-wide). A cost comparison of fire dollar loss figures 2003 to 2010 shows a savings of \$187,953 in fire loss caused by young children in the program's target area.

Both KidsFirst Regina and Regina Fire & Protective Services are committed to continuing the program in order to maintain its success.

VI. Recommendations for Others

- Work with an established organisation that works regularly with families in your community's high fire-risk areas and obtain buy-in from your partner organisation by showing how their work can positively impact and change the fire problem among their clients.
- Provide a thorough fire data analysis of the community, then demonstrate the fire issue and its impact on the clients of your partner organisation.
- Outline common goals and objectives and work collaboratively with your partner organisation to develop resources specific to your client needs.
- Develop and provide regular support activities to your partner organisation and their clientele.
- Formalize your partnership agreement.
- Incorporate multi-level evaluations of the program's impact and outcomes.
- Celebrate your successes.

VII. Conclusions

The KidsFirst-SafetyFirst Program illustrates that fire data analysis coupled with effective partnership and collaboration provides fire departments with results that can be demonstrated through model performance measures.