



News Release

New Year's Resolution: Practice Fire Escape Plans at Home ***Safe Kids Northeast Florida offers fire safety tips***

Jacksonville, FL, January 6, 2006 — Nationwide, every year, nearly 40,000 children ages 14 and under are injured in residential fires, and more than 500 die. Approximately four out of five fire-related deaths and injuries occur in the home, yet only one family out of four has developed and practiced a fire escape plan. [Safe Kids Northeast Florida](#) urges parents and caregivers to make a household New Year's resolution to hold fire drills at home until everyone knows how to get out safely in an emergency.

"Fire is especially dangerous to young children — ages 5 and under. They don't recognize the danger and don't know how to react," says Cynthia Dennis, RN, Safe Kids Northeast Florida coordinator. "Every year, dozens of children die while trying to escape from fires."

"Plan and practice several different escape routes from each room, and identify a safe place to meet outside," says Dennis. "Teach children never to go back into a burning building, and to call the fire department from a neighbor's home or a cell phone outside the home."

Most fire-related fatalities are caused by smoke inhalation. "A working smoke alarm cuts your chances of dying in a fire by about 50 percent," says Dennis. Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area — and test them every month and change the batteries twice a year. (Smoke alarms are also available with 10-year lithium batteries.)

"Make sure everyone knows what to do when the smoke alarm goes off," she says. "Never assume it's not a real fire." Teach kids to:

- Yell "fire" and get out immediately, not stopping to collect any belongings.
- Not open a closed door until they have made sure it is not hot to the touch and there is no smoke coming from behind it.
- Meet at a planned location outside.
- "Stop, drop and roll" if their clothing catches on fire.

In 2003, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 402,000 residential fires, or one every 79 seconds. Home fires are most often caused by cooking equipment; however, more children die in fires caused by tobacco products or by children playing with matches or lighters.

For more information about fire safety for children and families, visit www.usa.safekids.org.

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Baptist Health is a faith-based, mission-driven system comprised of Baptist Medical Center, Baptist Medical Center Beaches, Baptist Medical Center Nassau; Baptist Medical Center South and Wolfson Children's Hospital - Jacksonville's only children's hospital. Baptist Health also includes cardiology and cardiovascular surgery services, a comprehensive cancer center, orthopaedic institute, women's resource center, a full range of psychology and psychiatry services, outpatient facilities and a network of primary care physicians' offices throughout Northeast Florida. Baptist Health is the official healthcare provider for the Jacksonville Jaguars.

