A message on **Fire Safety**

Dear Parent:

Teaching children about fire safety goes much further than simply telling them not to play with matches.

This brochure, adapted from the NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control's pamphlet, will help you teach your children how to escape safely from a fire. It provides instructions on how to run Exit Drills In The Home (E.D.I.T.H.). By teaching your children this drill and what happens during a fire, they will be less likely to panic during an actual emergency.

If I can be of assistance in this or any other matter, please call my office.

Sincerely,

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Why E.D.I.T.H.?

Exit Drills In The Home

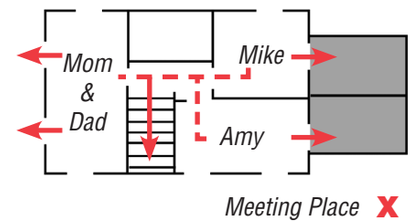
Adapted from the NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services' Office of Fire Prevention and Control's "Exit Drills in the Home" pamphlet, at www.dhses.ny.gov; click "State Fire," then scroll to Publications. Email: fire@dhses.ny.gov; 518-474-6746

E.D.I.T.H. Step-by-step

1 Planning your escape

A. The floor plan.

- Draw an outline of your home or apartment. Make a drawing for each floor where people sleep. Dimensions don't need to be exact.
- Now add each bedroom and label it. Show important details: stairs, hallways, roofs that could be used as a fire escape.
- Choose a family meeting place and show it on the plan.



B. Inspection time!

- Check each bedroom for the best window or door for an emergency escape.
- Test windows - make sure they open easily and are large enough and low enough. Ask yourself: can children open them?
- While you're at it, check your smoke detector. If you don't have one, get one.

C. Finish your escape plan.

- Use blue or black arrows to show the normal way out, such as the stairs or hall.
- Use different colored arrows to show emergency exits in case fire blocks your normal route.

Tips

- Be sure everyone has a second way out.
- Escape ladders may be necessary.
- Any security devices should open easily. In a fire you might not be able to find a key.
- If necessary, rearrange bedrooms to provide easier escape for children, elderly or disabled.
- Never use elevators if there's a fire.

Why E.D.I.T.H.?

- Most fatal home fires happen between midnight and 8 a.m. when most people are asleep.
- Toxic gases and heat, which can reach over 1000˚ F, rise and can travel far ahead of the actual flames.
- When your smoke detector sounds, you may have less than 2 1/2 minutes to get out. Without an escape plan you have practiced, you may not make it.
- If you don't have a smoke detector, you risk never waking up.

Updated 3/13

2 The family meeting

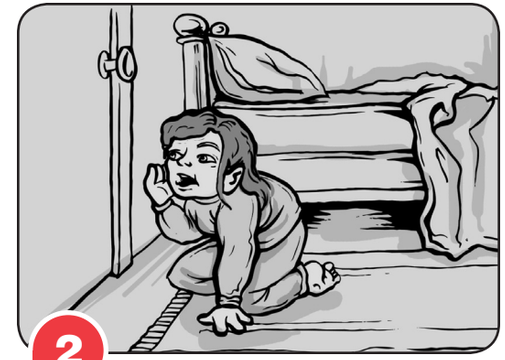
Discuss your plan and these procedures with your family:

1. Always sleep with bedroom doors closed. This will keep heat and smoke out for a short time – the few extra minutes you may need to escape.
2. Find a way for everyone to sound a family fire alarm. Blow a whistle, pound on walls, yell, etc.
3. In a fire, seconds count. Don't waste time dressing or looking for valuables or pets. As much as they may mean to you, your life is more important.
4. Roll out of bed. Stay low. Just one breath of smoke or hot gases can kill you.
5. Feel the door. If the door or doorknob is hot, don't open it! Instead, use your second way out.
6. Once outside, go to your family meeting place. Check to see if everyone is safe. Once you're out, stay out!
7. Call 911 or the appropriate emergency contact from a neighbor's house, cellular phone, or other safe location. Again, once you are out, STAY OUT!

3 The drill

1. Begin with everyone in his or her bed.
2. Sound the alarm. Press the smoke detector test button. Yell FIRE! or use some other signal.
3. Everyone should roll out of bed, stay low and feel the door for heat. First time: use the normal exit. Brace your shoulder against the door and open it slowly, ready to shut it quickly if there is heat or smoke. Second time: pretend doors are hot. Everyone must use the second way out.
4. Gather at meeting place and check that everyone is out.
5. Appoint someone to simulate calling the fire department.
6. Get together to talk about the drill. Make changes to the plan if necessary and rehearse them.
7. Hold a family escape drill every few months – at least twice a year. The more you practice, the better you will be able to act quickly and automatically in a fire emergency.

1 Roll out of bed. DON'T SIT UP.



2 Keeping low, call out to your family.

3 Test the door with the back of your hand for heat. If it is hot, DO NOT OPEN.

4 ALWAYS stay low below the smoke.

5 Should the fire have blocked your normal escape route, use your emergency exit.

6 Once outside, go to your family meeting place and call for help. Once you are out, STAY OUT!