

Risk Assessment

Hazard/Risk: Fire Lighting

- **Level:** Medium to High

- **Control/Action:**
 - **Preparation:**
 - **Site Selection:** Choose a designated fire area that is free from overhanging branches, dry grass, or other flammable materials. Preferably, use a fire pit or a cleared patch of ground.
 - **Fire Safety Equipment:** Ensure that a water bucket is readily available at the fire site.
 - **Weather Conditions:** Monitor weather conditions and avoid fire lighting on particularly windy or dry days.
 - **Clear Boundaries:** Create a clear boundary and ensure children stay at a safe distance unless directly involved.

 - **Supervision:**
 - **Qualified Supervision:** A trained and experienced staff member should lead the fire lighting activity. This person must be knowledgeable in fire safety and emergency procedures.
 - **Constant Supervision:** Children must be supervised at all times when near the fire.
 - **Safety Briefing:** Provide a thorough safety briefing before lighting the fire. Explain the importance of staying within the designated area, how to safely approach the fire, and the correct way to use the fire-lighting tools.
 - Children to kneel when approaching the fire to toast smore, so they are unlikely to fall into the fire.

- **Lighting the Fire:**
 - **Safe Techniques:** Use flint and steel, matches, or other safe fire-lighting methods. Ensure that only the designated leader or trained individuals light the fire initially.
 - **Controlled Ignition:** Start with a small amount of tinder and kindling. Gradually add larger pieces of wood to ensure the fire remains controlled and manageable.
 - **No Accelerants:** Absolutely no use of accelerants like lighter fluid or gasoline

- **During the Fire:**
 - **Managing the Fire:** Regularly monitor and manage the size of the fire. Ensure it does not become too large or uncontrollable.
 - **Participant Distance:** Maintain a safe distance between the fire and participants. Children should be seated or standing at least 2-3 meters away unless they are actively participating under supervision.
 - **Safe Cooking:** If cooking over the fire (e.g., making s'mores), use long-handled skewers and ensure children are supervised closely. Remind children to wait for their food to cool before eating to avoid burns.
 - **Behavior Management:** Enforce rules such as no running around the fire, no throwing objects into the fire, and no poking the fire with sticks.

- **Extinguishing the Fire:**
 - **Complete Extinguishment:** At the end of the session, ensure the fire is completely extinguished. Pour water over the fire, stir the ashes, and pour more water until there are no remaining embers.
 - **Cool-Down Period:** Allow the fire area to cool completely before leaving the site. Check for any remaining heat to ensure no risk of re-ignition.
 - **Post-Activity Check:** Perform a final site inspection to ensure the fire area is safe and secure before leaving.

- **Emergency Response:**
 - **Emergency Plan:** Have a clear emergency plan in place. All staff should be familiar with procedures in the event of an uncontrolled fire, including evacuation routes and contacting emergency services.
 - **First Aid:** Ensure that a first aid kit is on hand, and that staff are trained to deal with fire-related injuries, such as burns or smoke inhalation. Ensure a large bottle of clean water is available to rinse burns.
- **Risk Benefits:**
 - **Fire Safety Education:** Teaches children about the responsible and safe use of fire, including how to start and extinguish a fire safely.
 - **Survival Skills:** Provides basic survival skills that are useful in outdoor and emergency scenarios.
 - **Confidence and Responsibility:** Builds confidence as children learn to manage and respect fire, understanding its potential dangers and benefits.
 - **Teamwork and Cooperation:** Encourages teamwork as children work together to gather materials, prepare the fire, and participate in safe cooking activities.