

Matches and Lighters

--Lesson Plan--

Time Required: 20 minutes

Objective: Children will learn to identify matches and lighters as tools for adults.

Background:

Matches and lighters are often accessible to young children at home, in stores, gas stations, restaurants, hotels, as well as in the homes of friends and relatives. Easy access combined with a natural curiosity about fire can lead to behaviors which put children at risk of fire injury, so it's important for children to identify matches and lighters as tools for adults.

Materials Needed:

- ❖ Two boxes, one marked "toys" and the other marked "tools."
- ❖ Several tools and toys, teacher's choice.

Activity (This activity is provided by Jerry DiMillo of the Portland, Maine Fire Department)

First, select and play the "Matches and Lighters" song. (GO FOR SAFETY CD song #1).

(1) I use two boxes...one marked "toys" and one marked "tools." I pile an assortment of toys and tools together on a table in front of the children. The "toolbox" is on one side of the table and the "toy box" on the other side. Hidden in the pile is a book of matches and a lighter.

(2) I select a tool, such as a hammer, and ask the children these questions...

1. *Is this a tool or a toy?* (they will answer "tool.")
2. *What kind of tool is it?* (hammer)
3. *What kinds of good things can you do with a hammer?* (pound nails, fix things)
4. *Who uses a hammer?* (grown-ups)
5. *What can happen if children use a hammer?* (bang their fingers, or worse)
6. *If you saw this tool in your driveway, what would you do?* (tell, or give it to, a grown-up)

I choose another tool and ask the same questions. Then I alternate with toys, but with the toys I ask questions about having fun.

(3) I select the book of matches from the pile and ask question #1. Most children will be confused here. I ask if it's a toy and they will yell, "No." I ask if it's a tool and they will usually yell, "No." Then I say, "Well, let's see what this is." I proceed by asking the rest of the questions. When I ask what good things can you do with matches, among their answers will be to light birthday candles. Then I ask, "If I need a tool to pound a nail, what would I use?" They will answer "Hammer." I continue, "If I need a tool to screw in a screw, what would I use?" They'll answer "Screwdriver." "And if I need a tool to light the candles, what would I use?" They'll answer "Matches." "So matches are a tool, right?"

(4) I go through the rest of the tools and toys, and we discuss the lighter in the same way. Then I conclude the lesson by asking the children to verbally help me fill in the right words in this sentence..."Matches and lighters are (tools) and not (toys), and they are used by (grown-ups) and not (children), and if I find them lying around, I will (tell or give them to a grown-up). I applaud the children for their good work.

NOTE: For younger children, the message is to tell a grown-up. For older children, it's to give to a grown-up. If I'd be uncomfortable with the children picking up a knife or a piece of broken glass, then my message for them is to tell a grown-up.