

Introduction

Teaching a child fire exit drills in the home can save his life in the event of a fire. Do this once every six months so your child is comfortable with the escape procedures.

Instructions

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Steps

Step One

Explain to your child what you're going to teach him. Tell him it's similar to fire drills in school, and that it's just as important to have fire drills at home.

Step Two

Draw a simple diagram of your house and go over it carefully with your child.

Step Three

Find two escape routes for every room. Take the child to each room and ask him how he would escape if there were a fire.

Step Four

Practice opening [windows](#), taking off screens and using ladders (if on a second story). Children must be able to open windows and window locks and use collapsible ladders if on a second story.

Step Five

Make sure there are no security bars on bedroom windows - or if there are, that they can be opened and closed easily. You may even want to remove bars from your child's room.

Step Six

Sleep with bedroom [doors](#) closed, and teach your child that if the smoke detector goes off, he should feel the door with the back of his hand before opening it.

Step Seven

Teach your child to place the back of his hand on the door to check for heat, starting at the bottom and working up. Then he should place the back of his hand on the doorknob; if there's any heat outside the door, he should be able to feel it.

Step Eight

Teach your child to crack open the door - if he doesn't feel heat, he should stay low and check for smoke. If smoke is present, he should use the other way out.

Step Nine

Choose a place for family members to reconvene outside.

Step Ten

Tell your child that once he has escaped, he must not go back in the house for any reason until firefighters have deemed the house safe for re-entry.

Tips & Warnings

- Lower your child down from a window before escaping yourself. He may be too scared to escape if you go first and then motion for him to come down.
- Make sure smoke detectors are mounted inside each bedroom in your home, as well as in the hallway outside the bedrooms.
- Test your smoke detectors regularly.
- If a smoke detector goes off, you literally have seconds to respond. There is absolutely no time to gather possessions, pets and possibly even each other. Your best response is to leave your home immediately, gather at your prearranged meeting place and call 911 from a neighbor's home.
- Never go back into the house once you've escaped from a fire.