

## Pre-Kindergarten: Firefighters as Community Helper

Today your youngster got to talk about firefighters and what they do! If the firefighters aren't busy helping someone else, they would even have met one. Did you know that firefighters not only put out fires and get very sick or very hurt people to the hospital in ambulances, but that they also cut cars to get people out in accidents, know how to clean up hazardous materials that spill on the ground and in water, and can find you just about anywhere you are lost? What other things do you think they do to help you? Ask your youngster; he or she may be able to tell you more!

The youngsters also learned about the special clothing firefighters wear so they can stay safe, which can weigh up to 60 pounds! A few of the things they wear are:

- special pants and a jacket that protects them from heat up to 500 degrees.
- a special head and neck covering that also protects them from the heat of a fire.
- helmets, to keep them safe if something falls on them.
- heavy gloves to keep their hands from burning, and because they handle 'not so fun' things while they are fighting a fire.
- big, heavy boots to keep their feet protected from hot ground and sharp objects.

We talked about having a good escape plan from your house in case there is a fire, and specifically about having an Outside Meeting Place. Where is your Outside Meeting Place, or if you don't have one, where do you think would be a good place for your family to meet? It's so important to have a place that everyone knows so you know all family members are safe. The first firefighters to get to the scene are also going to see you at your Outside Meeting Place and come talk to you to make sure everyone is safe.

There is also special equipment firefighters use to put out fires. The youngsters learned about ladders, hoses, nozzles to match the type of fire, and, of course, fire engines of different types and sizes. Your youngster will tell you, some of this equipment is really heavy. Be sure to ask which one he or she liked the best!

We regularly use the website [www.sparky.com](http://www.sparky.com) for age-appropriate information and activities about fire and fire safety. And of course you can go to [bit.ly/RCFDSchool](http://bit.ly/RCFDSchool), where we have all the classes we teach. Some other web sites that have games and activities for youngsters about firefighters and firefighting are:

- <https://www.thespruce.com/firefighter-party-games-2104590>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/andreabeatypint/firefighter-ted-activities/>
- <http://www.childfun.com/themes/people/fire-fighters/>
- <https://www.kidssoup.com/activity/firefighter-and-fire-safety-activities-lessons-and-crafts>
- <http://www.summerfieldfire.com/kids.html>

While a firefighter's job is to put out a fire, you and your family's job is to get out and stay outside where you are safe. Here are some thoughts for you to remember:

- **Keep escape simple.** While our "old" messages about escaping a fire are still good, they are no longer taught to young children. Some of these "old" messages are feel a door before opening and crawl low under the smoke. A warm door is a warning of danger but a cool door does not indicate safety and cracking a cool door to an oxygen depleted hallway can kill in seconds. It is better to be lower than the smoke when there is smoke in the room but there is little chance of clean, cool air anywhere in the room if a 5-year old child must crouch or crawl to get under the smoke. If the smoke level is down three feet there probably isn't enough oxygen in the building to sustain life. Again, these are tips that can work but they are not guaranteed, muddle the point of escaping, and are not appropriate for a young child.

*Thank you for sharing your children with us!!*