



**MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC FIRE AND SAFETY EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM PLANNING GUIDEBOOK®**

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## Selection

Having identified the fire & life safety problems in your community, you need to select your target audience and the message you wish to teach. What is the behavior you want to change and whose behavior do you wish to change?

You select your audience based on what you have identified as the 'fire problem' or 'high risk' age group (potential victims). For example, if you have identified children playing with matches and lighters as a fire problem, your target audiences will be both preschoolers and their caregivers. The message will vary based on the audience. For preschoolers the message is "don't touch matches and lighters" whereas for the adults the message is "keep matches and lighters out of children's reach."

### Select Materials

You need to select the materials that you will use to deliver your message. These can include: curricula, handouts, videos, work/activity sheets, send home materials.

Select the topic and then gather the materials needed. Sometimes a 'windfall' of teaching materials is dropped on your desk and you are politely asked to use them. For example: your chief has received 4,000 coloring or activity books about 'home safety' from a local insurance agent. Now you have your teaching materials and the chief and the public relations photo in the newspaper dictate they must be used. You may need to shift your target audience up or down a grade in order to use the materials with an age appropriate group. If you are in doubt about using certain materials, consult a teacher with whom you have a relationship, someone who will be honest about the materials. Call a fire and life safety educator in a neighboring community to ask for help. Often the materials available to you may have been handed to you by the prior educator. Review the materials, talk with other fire educators and decide what other curricula you might need. Estimate the costs for the new materials.

### Make Sure Your Message Matches Your Audience

It is important to do some market research and review the developmental information about your target audience.



## **Selection (Continued)**

Keep in mind the age, ability and attention span of the students. It is your responsibility to keep the lesson interesting and challenging. Teaching 'Stop-Drop and Roll' to a preschool or kindergarten class can take an entire period. While addressing the older students, a fire safety educator may only need to ask the question "what do you do if your clothes catch on fire?" to determine if they recall this behavior. Developmental information is provided at the beginning of each age group subsection in the Design Section. Select a few additional activities in case the lesson moves more quickly than you anticipated.

### **Do Some Market Research**

What do members of your audience think is the best way to reach them? Do you need an interpreter? How large will the group be? What is their current knowledge of fire safety? Find out if there are any cultural, developmental or traumatic fire experiences you should be aware of. Ask about the past relationships between the schools and the fire department.

### **Selecting the Key Fire Safety Behaviors**

Now you are ready to move onto the Design Section where you will find the information needed to design your lesson plan based on the fire safety behaviors and audience that you want to teach.