

How to enhance the Fire PALS program  
For your students  
For teachers of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade



**Fire PALS  
School Based Injury Prevention Program  
Waterloo Fire Rescue  
Waterloo, Iowa**

Waterloo Fire Rescue  
“Building a Safety Conscious Community”

## **The Role of the Classroom Teacher**

The role of the teacher is vital to the success of the Fire PALS Program. It requires a commitment of time and resources, which cannot be overlooked or unrecognized. With mandates by school district governing boards, and requirements by state and federal governments, teachers have become inundated with things to teach in the classroom. Waterloo Fire Rescue understands and sympathizes with the workload placed on teachers. That's why the Fire PALS Program is designed to be easily understood, flexible and simple to use, while also targeting assorted benchmarks that you are tasked with having your students reach. A full commitment to the Fire PALS Program means that the teacher will be willing to have a Fire PALS instructor or Fire Department representative, such as a guest speaker, if available, spend a reasonable amount of time in the classroom conducting the lessons, which in a normal time frame would amount to a 20 to 30 minute presentation for approximately 4 weeks.

*Waterloo Fire Rescue will provide printed handouts for all students including a parent packet that includes letters to parents that explain each day's lesson. We also provide a student handbook for all of the children participating in our program. Use of the student handbooks by classroom teachers is not mandatory. If you chose not to use them with your students, please send them home with the children so that parents can use them as a learning tool. **Additional life safety lessons and activities can be found on our website [www.firepals.com](http://www.firepals.com).***

## **Lessons that are taught to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders**

**Home Escape Planning:** The goal of this lesson is to educate the students on the importance of operating smoke detectors and having a home escape plan for their homes. The Fire PAL instructor will discuss with the students the actions to take to safely exit the house (feeling the door with the back of the hand, once out of the house/ stay out, take no time to retrieve possessions or pets, call 911 from a neighbor's house.)

### ***What you can do to enhance this lesson:***

1. Have the students complete the student information page, "Fire Safety Always Starts With You," "Do you know your fire safety?" activity page, smoke alarm coloring page/crawl low under smoke coloring page.
2. The Fire PALS instructor will encourage the students to use the home escape plan grid to create a home escape plan with a parent. There is a copy of this in the student handbook as well as in the parent packet.
3. Make sure to send the parent packet home with the students.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety:** The goal of this lesson is to teach students how to ride a bicycle safely, understand the importance of wearing a bike helmet, and the rules of the road for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Fire PALS instructor will discuss bicycle and pedestrian safety with the children and will demonstrate the correct way to wear a helmet and all of the proper hand signals. Emphasis will be placed on safe riding habits and rules of the road.

***What you can do to enhance this lesson:***

1. Have the students do the activity in the student handbook, “Math connection-color by number.”
2. How much do your students know about bike safety? You can use the bike safety quiz in the student handbook as a whole class activity or as an independent student activity. The answers to the quiz are: 1.F 2.F 3.T 4.T 5.F 6.F 7.F 8.F 9.F 10.T 11.T 12.F 13.F 14.F 15.T 16.T 17.F 18.T 19.T
3. Have the children view the interactive flash videos “Bike Safety,” (available on our website Spring 2010) and “Crosswalk Safety” on the home page of our website [www.firepals.com](http://www.firepals.com).
4. In conjunction with Waterloo Fire Rescue (or your local fire department) and Think First Iowa (Allen Hospital), conduct a bike rodeo with the students in your class/grade level. This will take some planning and commitment, but overall is a great activity that reinforces bike safety.

**Latchkey Children Safety:** Over 50 percent of all school age children are home alone, either before or after school for an average of 30 minutes a day. The goal of this lesson is to educate the student to recognize skills necessary for them to feel safe while home alone. The Fire PALS instructor will define latchkey for the students, and will talk about the skills that will help the students deal with any fears or anxieties they may have while home alone. The Fire PALS instructor will have the students fill out an emergency information sheet that has important phone numbers such as their parent work and cell phone numbers as well as important community contact numbers.

***What you can do to enhance this lesson:***

1. Make sure that the students fill out their emergency contact information sheets and encourage the students to take them home and share with parents. A great place for them to post them at home is on the refrigerator or by the phone.
2. Have the students do the coloring page, “Practice safety” in the student handbook. Additional pages in the student handbook that can be done at any time are: “Firefighters Language Arts Connection,” and “Unscramble words” vocabulary connection. The answers to the word scramble going down the columns left to right are: stay low, rescue, crawl, firefighter, escape, safe, exits, smoke alarm, battery.

3. Have the children view the interactive flash video “Latchkey Children Safety,” available on our website Spring 2010)

**Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Assembly, Think First Iowa,**

**Allen Hospital:** Think First is a national program that was developed by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons. Each year 5,000 Iowans receive brain or spinal cord injuries. For some death is instantaneous. For those who survive, life is never the same. Think First Iowa is all about making good choices, choices that can save young lives. A representative from Think First Iowa will present the story of how they were injured and how their injury has affected/changed their life. This program is part of the second and third grade Fire PALS curriculum and will cover the prevention of brain and spinal cord injuries. Your Fire PALS instructor and school principal will work together to bring this important program to your school. To learn more about Think First Iowa, visit their website at [www.thinkfirstiowa.org](http://www.thinkfirstiowa.org).

***What you can do to enhance this lesson:***

1. After the assembly, have your students take time to reflect and journal about what they learned. You may want to use the Fire PALS journal page in the back of the student handbook for this activity.

**Safety Trailer:** The safety trailer visit contains 3 elements: kitchen safety, emergency 911 and home escape planning. The safety trailer visit emphasizes the importance of E.D.I.T.H. (Exit Drills In the Home). By turning on the heated door and watching smoke enter from the door jam, the firefighter shows how to feel for heat and block the non-toxic smoke with a pillow or towel and then evacuate to safety using the window and escape ladder. The firefighter on the outside of the trailer assists children in escaping. The middle section of the trailer has a control room that can be staffed with a firefighter who acts as a dispatcher in a 911 role-playing situation with the children. In the kitchen area of the trailer, the firefighter discusses important safety tips with the children including cooking safety, accidental poisoning prevention, and smoke detectors save lives. The safety trailer experience allows the firefighter to review many important safety lessons that have been touched based on throughout the Fire PALS visits, and gives the children a real life experience that helps the children simulate the dangers associated with a fire.

***What you can do to enhance this lesson:***

1. Prior to taking the students in your class out to the safety trailer, discuss the importance of following classroom rules and discuss expectations for good behavior.
2. After the safety trailer lesson, have the children write about their safety trailer experience in the student handbook on the “Safety Trailer” page.

**Summary:** Teachers are encouraged to participate in the Fire PALS program with their students. Because our Fire PALS instructors are not certified teachers, classroom teachers are encouraged to stay in the classroom to assist with classroom management. Any encouragement and feedback that you can give the Fire PALS instructors is appreciated.

**Thank you for participating in Waterloo Fire Rescue's Fire PALS Program!**