

GEKA

Glen Eira Kindergarten Association INC.



Safe Fires: The Process

1. **Collect your fuel.** This can be:

- a) tinder (dry leaves & grasses, wood shavings, rolled paper balls & newspaper)
- b) kindling (dead, dry twigs)
- c) fuel (wood)

It is suggested to have about two “hats” worth of kindling and tinder a safe distance from the fire, ready to use to keep the fire fuelled. You don’t want to have to leave the fire to find more fuel!

2. **Only use dry firewood!** Freshly cut wood contains up to 50 percent moisture. If steam bubbles and hisses on the fire, it’s wet or green—plus, it will make more campfire smoke, which burns the eyes!

3. **Clear a site at least 3 metres in every direction (including up!) from the fire.** The fire should ideally be on bare soil with all debris removed. Also avoid putting the fire under overhanging branches or other wood. A fire ring can be built with stones and rocks to contain the fire and to signal visually to children.

4. **Keep a big bucket of water or a hose close to the fire for emergency use and to use when you are ready to put out the fire.**

5. **Create a base in your fire pit by creating a “teepee”.** Make a loose pile of tinder in the centre (a couple of handfuls) and place the kindling vertically around the tinder resting against itself in the shape of a teepee. Once you light the fire, feed it with more branches and then eventually with wood as the fire grows.

6. **Light your fire.** Use matches or a lighter and light tinder from all sides. You can blow on the fire to give it oxygen to help start it, but blow gently! Never use an accelerant such as petrol or lighter fluid, and keep matches/lighters stored safely out of reach of children. Wait until the used match is cold, and then discard it in the fire. **Never put in a fire: aerosol cans, glass, aluminium cans and unopened tins of food (will explode).**

7. **Keep the fire going.** Eventually the base wood will burn through. As this happens, move it into the centre and replace with new wood. If you want to reduce the amount of fire, dampen it with a shovelful of dirt, sand or ash. If you want more flames, add kindling to the top. Generally speaking, keep your fire to the minimum size necessary for its purpose (e.g. cooking or keeping warm). **NEVER leave a fire unattended.**

8. **Put out the fire safely.** While it is ideal to allow the wood to burn completely to ash, this is not practical at a Kindergarten. To put out the fire, use a poker stick to break apart the remaining teepee structure. Slowly pour in litres of **water** (not soil) and stir it around so ALL embers are drowned, not just the red ones. Add more water until the hissing sound stops. **If it's not cold enough to touch, it's not cold enough to leave.** Dispose of the remains thoughtfully in the garden or rubbish bins OR leave in the fire pit for your next fire (this is symbolic in many native traditions).

MARSHMALLOW TIP: Don't put the roasting stick straight into the flames; place it to the side over glowing coals!

Other cooking ideas: potatoes, damper, bananas (with choc chips!), bread...and so much more!

Enjoy! Teach the children about fire and fire safety in a positive way; cook yummy food together and keep warm and safe while doing so 😊