

X Marks the Spot: A Fire Escape Game

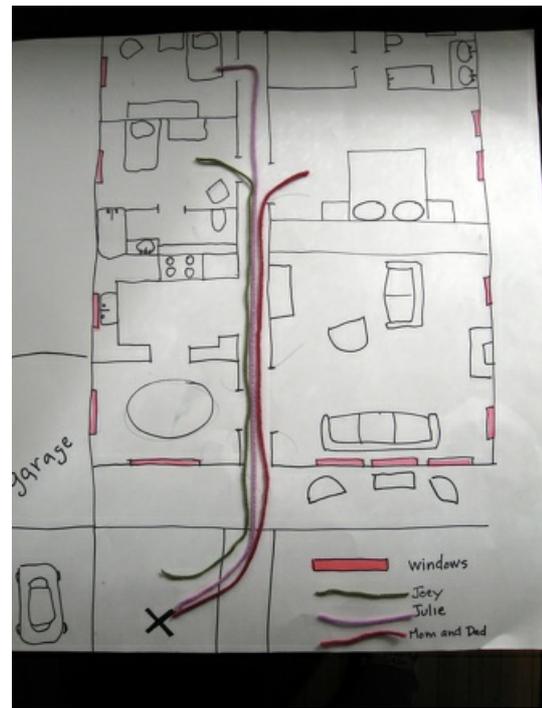
First grade is when schools usually introduce fire safety into the curriculum by conducting fire drills. Your child may even be lucky enough to have a firefighter come talk to his class! Fire drills may excite or frighten your child, but the fact is that fire safety is important. In this activity, your child will get to become a pirate and map out your house in search of the treasure where X marks the spot that your family will meet in case of a fire!

What You Need:

- Poster board
- Markers
- Yarn (a different color for each member of the family)
- Glue
- Coat hanger

What You Do:

1. Before you draw the map, hand your child a coat hanger and pretend it's a pirate hook as you explore each room of the house together. Ask her to pay close attention to the shapes of the rooms and where all the doors and windows are located.
2. Now you need a treasure map! Use the ruler to help your child draw a large map of your house on the piece of poster board, but leave space at the bottom for a key. Let her tell you where all the windows and doors are, and be sure to mark them clearly. Invite your child to label each room of the house in big, bold letters. Don't forget the hallways!
3. Decide as a family where you want to meet outside in case you get separated while evacuating the house. This spot will become the "X" that your little pirate should try to find. Be sure the spot can be easily found in the dark, like a street lamp or a neighbor's house, and make sure it's far enough from your house that you'll be safely away from the fire. Mark this spot on the map with an X.
4. Parents, this next step is for you. Go through the house and figure out two escape routes per room from each room in the house to the designated safety spot. One route should use a window in case the doors are blocked by fire. Be sure to check the windows to make sure they'll be easy to access.
5. Take out the yarn and let each family member pick a color, and be sure that everyone has a different color. The yarn will illustrate each escape route on the map. At the bottom of the poster board, have your child write each family member's name and invite her to glue the correct color of yarn next to each name. Explain that this will serve as the key, so you know which person belongs to each color of yarn.
6. Help your child cut two long pieces of yarn for each person and glue one end of both pieces to his or her bedroom on the map. The yarn has to be long enough to reach from the bedroom to the safety spot, so it might be helpful to sketch out the escape routes beforehand. Help your child glue the yarn down along the two different escape routes each person, making sure to go around walls and through doors and hallways.
7. Now that the "treasure map" is finished, hang it in a visible spot that the entire family can see.
8. Have a family fire drill to practice the different escape routes from your house. It might be a good idea to practice using obstacles, like pillows symbolizing fire that your child must avoid. Make it a competition and see which "pirate" safely reaches the X first! Reward the winner with a small prize, such as a scoop of ice cream or a new box of crayons. With a plan and practice, your family will be totally prepared in case of an emergency!



Some Extra Fire Safety Tips:

- If you smell smoke or if a fire alarm goes off, head for safety.
- Teach your child to Stop, Drop, and Roll in case her clothes catch on fire.
- Check to see if a door is hot before opening it.
- Stay low to the ground to avoid the smokey air.
- Remind your child what a firefighter looks like in gear, and that she should always go to one if the house is on fire.
- Explain to your child that it's okay if things in the house get burned; what matters is her safety.