

Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Education Program Delivery for Homeschoolers

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey J. Wittig". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jeffrey J. Wittig

Abstract

Due to an increased presence of homeschooling families in the Oak Hill community and across the country, the Oak Hill Fire Department needed to improve its fire safety and emergency preparedness education program delivery capabilities to be more appropriate and flexible for the target audience. The purpose of the research was how to meet the need for a fire safety and emergency preparedness education program that the Oak Hill Fire Department could utilize to provide education to homeschooled children. The descriptive method of research was applied to this study with questions asking what methods currently exist that can be utilized for effective delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials for homeschooled children, what are the barriers to delivering effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs in a homeschooled environment, and what do the current stakeholders believe is the most effective strategy to delivery fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs to homeschooled children in the Oak Hill community. After a review of literature and a survey of homeschooling families, the research concluded that there are many options for developing an effective and useful fire safety and emergency preparedness education program for homeschooling families in the community. The recommendation was to immediately update the department's website to include access to online fire safety and emergency preparedness education information and resources. The department should also increase its visibility to better reach homeschooling families in the community. Additionally, the Oak Hill Fire Department should work on establishing a defined lesson plan to ensure consistent fire safety and emergency preparedness education information delivery to residents that desire to tour or visit a fire station.

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Introduction

As the fire department of a small, non-municipal, rural community that borders the capital city of Austin, Texas, the Oak Hill Fire Department experiences difficulty in reaching a specific subset of the population with fire safety education and emergency preparedness education materials. Due to the rural nature of the jurisdiction, the community served by the Oak Hill Fire Department does not contain any public schools and only a few private schools serving various grade ranges.

The problem is that the fire safety and emergency preparedness education outreach of the Oak Hill Fire Department is nonexistent for homeschooled children in its jurisdiction. The purpose of the research is to establish the need for a fire safety and emergency preparedness education program that the Oak Hill Fire Department can utilize to provide education to homeschooled children. The descriptive method of research will be utilized to answer the following questions: (a) what methods currently exist that can be utilized for effective delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials for homeschooled children, (b) what are the barriers to delivering effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs in a homeschooled environment and, (c) what do the current stakeholders believe is the most effective strategy to deliver fire safety and emergency preparedness education to homeschooled children?

Background and Significance

The Oak Hill Fire Department was established in 1968 by a group of area volunteers who were surprised to find that fire hydrants were near their residences but no fire department was organized or established to utilize them. Donations were gathered from area residents and business owners to purchase an old military crash truck to establish the service delivery of the

Oak Hill Fire Department. From these humble beginnings, the Oak Hill Fire Department has developed into a mostly paid combination fire department that has committed to four firefighters per unit minimum paid staffing levels and supports a volunteer force to supplement its needs on large scale incidents. The Oak Hill Fire Department also enjoys a closest-unit automatic aid relationship with six other area departments, including every bordering department in its county.

The background of this problem is related to three main ideas and this study is significant to the Oak Hill Fire Department in that as the potential for people to homeschool their children rises, the Oak Hill Fire Department does not have a plan for developing an effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education program to support this approach to childhood education. Secondly, as a rural community on the outskirts of the urbanized state capital city of Austin, Texas, the Oak Hill Fire Department struggles to deliver an array of services that meet the demands of the community on less than adequate funding based on property values. Without significant funding initiatives, continuation of effective and safe firefighting operations is in jeopardy. As the city of Austin continues its annexation of developed areas within the Oak Hill Fire Department jurisdiction, funding from property values continues to decrease. The support of the community will be paramount in the future success of the Oak Hill Fire Department both operationally and in the delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education. The Oak Hill Fire Department must rely either on alternative funding or alternative deployment methods to develop and implement an effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education program for homeschoolers. Finally, the inability to provide an effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education program for homeschoolers in the community renders the Oak Hill Fire Department unable to maintain its positive statistics related to injury or death due to fire or other emergency incidents in the Oak Hill Fire Department's jurisdiction. The Oak Hill

Fire Department currently conducts brief and insubstantial fire safety education when children visit a fire station. With no public schools in the Oak Hill Fire Department jurisdiction, there is no active school-based fire safety education program in place. Failing to make a positive impact on this risk group also increases the potential for firefighter death or injury due to responding to emergencies that could have been prevented or minimized through an effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education program.

This study relates to the United States Fire Administration's strategic goals number one and two. Strategic goal one seeks to reduce risk at the local level through prevention and mitigation. By studying this problem, the Oak Hill Fire Department will be able to develop an effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education program for homeschoolers. This will have a direct impact to strategic goal one as a local prevention initiative. Strategic goal two seeks to improve local planning and preparedness. By studying this problem, the Oak Hill Fire Department will reach a new target audience with fire safety and emergency preparedness education. This will empower the community to teach preparedness to homeschoolers that otherwise may not have access to this type of education. As the target audience ages, the knowledge and awareness obtained with the fire safety and emergency preparedness education program will provide a broader population knowledge base that also expands into other communities.

In studying this problem, the Oak Hill Fire Department will exercise leadership as it relates to the National Fire Academy Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction course by providing the impetus to develop an educational program focused on reaching homeschoolers in the community. As a solution is applied to the problem, the Oak Hill Fire Department will be in a position to manage and lead the necessary change that will be applicable to many

departments and communities throughout the country. The Oak Hill Fire Department will be in a position to assist other departments across the country that have difficulty reaching children that are homeschooled and are otherwise missing out on critical fire safety and emergency preparedness education through its example.

Literature Review

The question of delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education to homeschooled children is not well addressed in current literature. Most research has been conducted in the realm of implementing a fire safety education program within public schools. Additional research focuses on improvements to existing fire safety education programs when children visit a fire station for a tour or visit.

Nationwide, homeschooling in core subject curriculum is occurring at a higher incidence than in prior years. According to the National Fire Academy's Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction coursework in connection with the National Fire Academy's Changing American Family at Risk course, "Homeschooling is another rapidly growing trend" (July 2012, p. 49). In the state of Texas, homeschoolers conduct their studies based on their own individual selection of curriculum. There is no standing governmental requirement about what specific curriculum must be presented; only a requirement that homeschoolers are responsible for selecting and teaching whatever they choose. Further, if a child has previously been enrolled in the public school system, homeschoolers only need to attest that they will instruct the child in such fashion as to achieve sufficient learning regarding reading, mathematics, and good citizenship. In the state of Texas, there is no standardized reporting or testing requirement for homeschoolers, so compliance with instructing any particular curriculum is purely self policing and discretionary. Core subject curriculum is generally available nationwide and even worldwide as many states

have specific curriculum requirements that help generate the overall availability of textbooks and associated learning materials for homeschoolers to purchase or otherwise utilize.

Throughout the fire service nationwide, many departments prepare and deliver fire safety and emergency preparedness education to public schools and some private schools as a matter of the general course of business of a fire department. Access to this critical education has become somewhat expected of the fire service, but has recently come under attack due to time constraints from schools and funding from the respective fire departments (Federal Emergency Management Agency, July 2012, p. 49). Fire Departments continue to struggle to stay relevant to the communities they serve. Fire departments across the country prepare and deliver fire safety and emergency preparedness education utilizing many different approaches. These methods include in-person discussions, presentations, role-playing demonstrations, internet-based content, and handouts (coloring books, pamphlets, plastic helmets, stickers, and temporary tattoos, etc.). Firehouse Magazine published an article concerning public safety education and occupancy fires, which discussed the idea that many programs are less about fire prevention and more about fire survival (Byrne, 2008). To expand on this thought, the fire service teaches concepts of fire survival more so than fire prevention and preparedness.

In other safety related organizations, the Home Safety Council includes home-based materials designed for preschoolers and their caregivers through their Start Safe Fire Safety Program up to information appropriate for up to 14 year olds and adults (Home Safety Council, 2008). The National Crime Prevention Council utilizes an interactive internet-based approach to safety education dealing with crimes and bullying for school-aged children (2007). The site also includes an advice section dealing with many topics, including several fire safety and emergency preparedness education topics. Basic emergency preparedness information is available for

children through Seattle Children's Hospital where their site tailors fire safety and emergency preparedness education planning information to those with special needs (2011). Younger children and their caregivers can make use of Catalytic Media Group's <http://www.firefacts.org> and <http://www.firesafekids.org> websites, which provide interactive access to fire safety information as well as an interactive fire safety learning system available for purchase on compact disk (CD) media (2007). The Federal Emergency Management Association provides materials to help teachers and parents educate children in grades four and five at <http://www.ready.gov> (2010). Mighty Kids Media offers a website under its flagship brand, Danger Rangers, to provide family friendly content for educating the pre-kindergarten to third grade student (2010). The Boy Scouts of America has curriculum available for their Emergency Preparedness Award, which requires training in particular areas of the scouting curriculum as well as contact with external emergency preparedness agencies to earn the award (Boy Scouts of America, 2012). The scouting emergency preparedness award program consists of requirements designed for different scout ranks so that the curriculum utilized is applicable to and appropriate for multiple age groups. Related to the Boy Scouts of America program in general, Emergency Management magazine published an article titled "Including Scouts in Emergency Management Training Pays Dividends" which comments on the story of an 11-year old scout who participated in a disaster drill that helped him know how to respond several years later when a rare tornado in Kenosha County, Wisconsin destroyed 27 homes and damaged 78 others. The scout was presented with the Heroism Award from the Boy Scouts of America based on his actions that day after learning how to be prepared by participating in an emergency management disaster drill and training (Maack, 2009).

Private companies also take initiative to include fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials online, such as the BIC Corporation's website, <http://www.playsafebesafe.com>, where instructional materials as well as games and activity information can be downloaded (2006). The Oracle Education Foundation includes fire safety and emergency preparedness education information on their ThinkQuest website <http://www.thinkquest.org>, which involves projects developed by students for students, to customize the learning experience for the target audience (1999). Liberty Mutual Insurance operates <http://www.befiresmart.com> with information for homeowners and parents to help teach their children through a variety of fire safety and emergency preparedness education delivery methods (quizzes, interactive fire protective clothing applications, coloring books, games, and an interactive fire based exhibit) (2009).

Fire departments utilizing curriculum in a variety of approaches include the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) utilizing a website through its Fire Zone foundation, which includes fire safety curricula and activity kits for teachers and parents in eight languages (New York City Fire Department Foundation, 2009). Montgomery County, Maryland manages the "Safety in Our Neighborhood" website, providing interactive fire safety and emergency preparedness education information to meet many different points of curiosity about firefighting and generalized fire safety (2007).

Application and delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs have been researched in several Executive Fire Officer research projects. These projects have also contributed significantly to the development of fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs. Research was conducted on preschool head start programs for effectiveness in fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs (Sullivan, 2005), early elementary

school and station tour fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs (Tessinear, 2011), early elementary school fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs (Ubbink, 2011), elementary school fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs (Love, 2009) and (Monk, 2011), and curriculum that met the fire safety and emergency preparedness education needs of autistic children (Russell IV, 2009).

Procedures

To answer research question one related to methods that currently exist that can be utilized for effective delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs for homeschooled children, current and former homeschoolers were studied to ascertain their awareness of fire safety and emergency preparedness education curriculum available for homeschoolers. A survey instrument was utilized to gather data concerning this target audience.

To answer research question two related to determining the potential barriers to delivering an effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education program in a homeschooled environment, current or former homeschoolers were studied through a survey instrument to determine what the target audience assessed as barriers or issues to making delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education curriculum effective.

To answer research question three related to determining the most effective strategy to delivering fire safety and emergency preparedness education to homeschooled children, current and former homeschoolers were studied through a survey instrument to gather and analyze the opinions of the target audience concerning the most effective method to develop a meaningful curriculum and delivery plan for homeschoolers.

The survey instrument utilized to answer research questions one, two, and three consisted of a request sent to a statewide and then nationwide homeschooling list serve group requiring

screened joining privileges and with moderator approved posts as well as a posting on a non-public, restricted membership Facebook page. A request was submitted to the list serve moderator for permission to post an invitation to an online survey instrument. A limitation of the survey was that the invitation was posted on a newsgroup-style list serve, meaning that not every member of the restricted access group may have seen the invitation to be able to participate. Another limitation was that the online survey was only advertised to those with existing computer and internet access in some fashion, whether by membership in the restricted list serve or those that felt inspired to include themselves from a general Facebook announcement. Those homeschoolers without easy access to these online data sources would have had found it difficult to participate in the survey. This inability to engage another potential subset of the target audience could skew the results to certain questions about how best to structure a curriculum offering and outreach approach for fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs. It is conceded that those without computers or internet access would not generally opt for online fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials.

Results

In the survey of homeschoolers, it was found that of the 188 respondents to the survey instrument, 185 currently or previously homeschooled their children. The survey instrument utilized to answer research questions one, two, and three consisted of a total of 10 questions described below with survey response percentages and attached as appendices.

Question one inquired if the respondent currently or previously homeschooled their children. Responses were solicited in a Yes or No fashion. Ninety-eight percent of respondents indicated they did or had homeschooled their children. Two percent indicated they did not. See Appendix A.

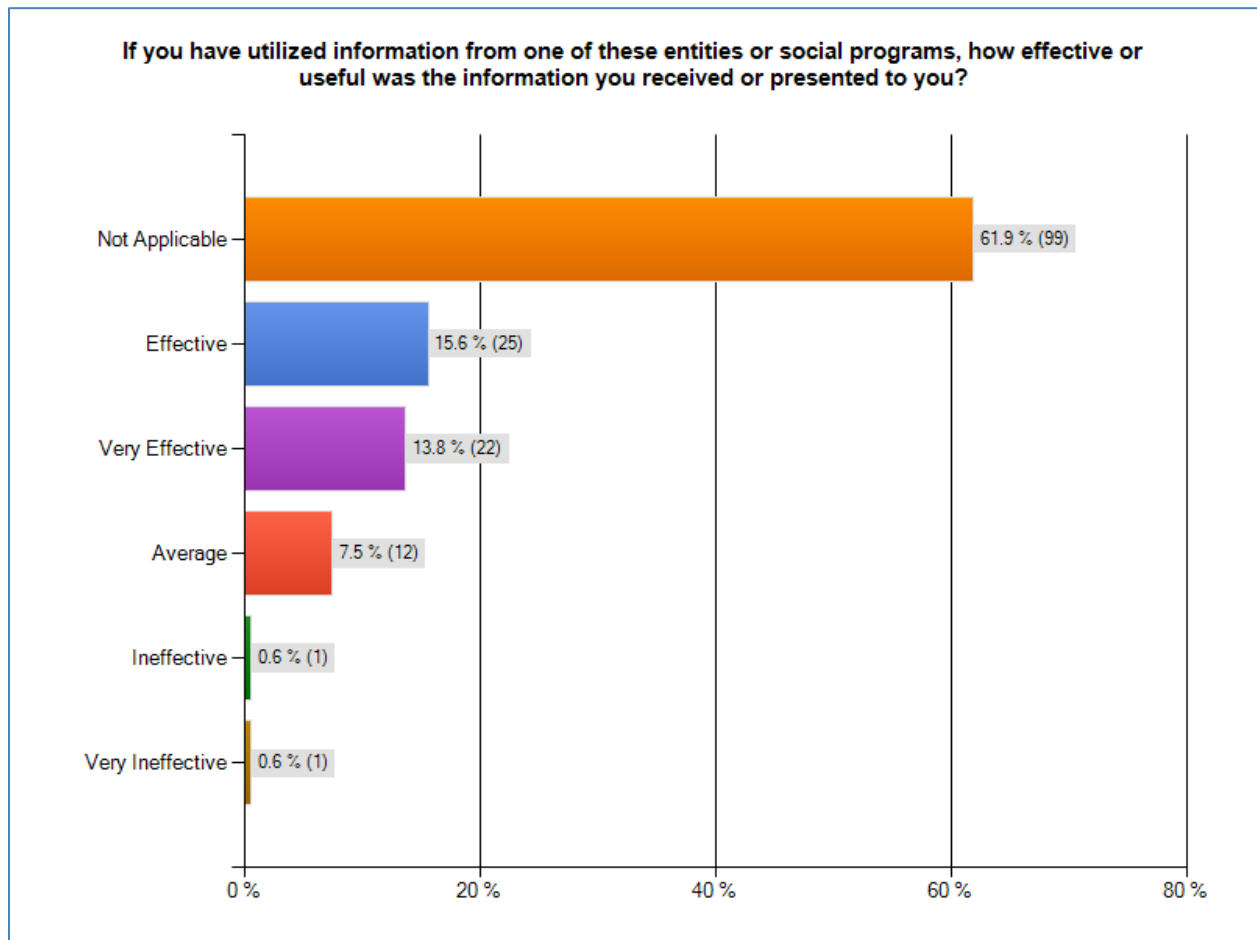
Question two inquired if the respondent had ever included education or discussion about Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness in their homeschooler curriculum with Yes, No, or Not Applicable presented as possible responses. Seventy-three percent of respondents indicated they had included Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness information in their homeschooler curriculum. Twenty-five percent indicated they had not included this information and 1% indicated the question was not applicable. See Appendix B.

Question three inquired if the respondent had used any Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness curriculum from other entities or social programs (such as the Boy Scouts of America, American Heritage Girls, Girls Scouts of America, Campfire Girls, Big Brothers Big Sisters, etcetera). Available responses were: Yes, No, or Not Applicable. Seventy-one percent of respondents selected yes for their response, 28% of respondents selected no for their response, while 1% indicated this question was not applicable. See Appendix C.

Question four requested a response to indicate which curriculum the respondent had used, if any, from another entity or social program. Response choices presented were: Boy Scouts of America, American Heritage Girls, Girl Scouts of America, Campfire Girls, Big Brothers Big Sisters, None, or Other. Multiple answers were allowed with an option to specify which curricula were used if “other” was selected. Sixty-one percent of respondents indicated that they used none, 26% indicated other, 17% indicated Boy Scouts of America, 8% indicated Girl Scouts of America, and 3% indicated American Heritage Girls. See Appendix D.

Question five requested that the respondent to rate how effective or useful the information received or presented from one of the entities or social programs was for their homeschooled children. Response choices were: Very Effective, Effective, Average, Ineffective, Very Ineffective, or Not Applicable. Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated not applicable,

14% indicated very effective, 16% indicated effective, 8% indicated average, and 1% each for ineffective and very ineffective. See Appendix E.



Question six requested a response of Yes or No if the respondent was aware or had previously utilized information from the United States Fire Administration website for Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness information (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/kids>). Eighty-four percent indicated they were not aware or had not utilized information from the United States Fire administration while 17% indicated they were aware of or had utilized this information. See Appendix F.

Question seven requested that the respondent rate how effective or useful the information received or presented from the United States Fire Administration was for their homeschooled

children. Response choices were: Very Effective, Effective, Average, Ineffective, Very Ineffective, or Not Applicable. Eighty percent indicated not applicable, 8% indicated effective, 8% indicated average, and 4% indicated very effective. See Appendix G.

Question eight inquired if the respondent had ever contacted their local fire department for assistance with fire safety or emergency preparedness information with responses limited to Yes or No. Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated they had not contacted their local fire department for assistance and 37% indicated they had contacted their local fire department for assistance. See Appendix H.

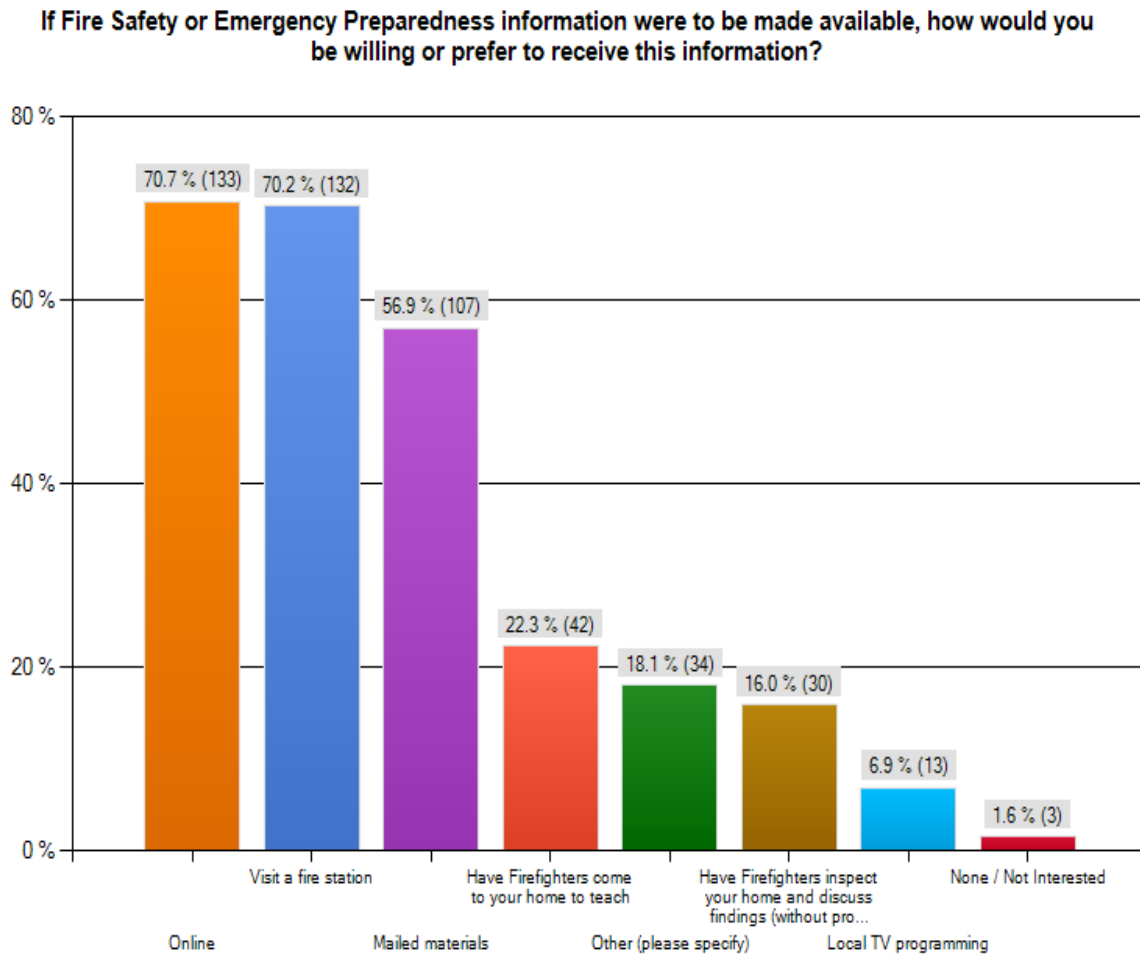
Question 9 requested that the respondent rate how effective or useful the information received from their local fire department was. Response choices were: Very Effective, Effective, Average, Ineffective, Very Ineffective, or Not Applicable. Fifty-nine percent indicated not applicable, 26% indicated very effective, 11% indicated effective, 4% indicated average, and 1% indicated ineffective. See Appendix I.

Question ten requested the respondent to indicate how they would be willing or prefer to receive fire safety or emergency preparedness information if it were available. Response choices presented were: Online, Mailed materials, Visiting a fire station, Having Firefighters come to the home to teach, Having Firefighters inspect their home and discuss findings (without providing direct instruction), Local TV programming, None/Not Interested, or Other. Multiple answer responses were accepted with an option to specify their preference if “other” was selected. Seventy percent indicated online information was preferred, 70% indicated visiting a fire station, 57% indicated mailed materials, 22% indicated having firefighters come to their home to instruct, 16% indicated having firefighters inspect their home and discuss findings (without providing direct teaching), 7% indicated local TV programming, 2% indicated none/not

interested, and 18% indicated other as detailed below (unique answers not already listed above).

See Appendix J.

- A DVD would be useful on fire safety.
- Videos available at library or through another source.
- During the lead up to Hurricane Sandy, I was impressed with our county Facebook feed. They had good information, with links to the county web pages. Material like an extensive emergency phone list that included county offices, non-emergency numbers for police and fire, utilities (including cable - which provides many with phone service).
- The city of Windsor (Ontario) has a Children's Safety Village (<http://www.thesafetyvillage.com/>) and they have invited us as homeschoolers to have a seat on their curriculum board. This gives us a voice in the arena.
- Good online sites with multiple resources to choose from are great. Worksheets, coloring books, group activity ideas, lessons that tie in with other subjects (chemistry of fire, lab safety, cooking safety, local things (brush fires), etc.
- Lesson plans for a 1-day seminar or field trip type of activity.
- Booths at public events. Usually there will be a local fire truck and firefighters giving out information and explaining.
- Have firefighters come to a co-op or other homeschooling group to teach.
- I once read about how a library had a fire safety session for homeschoolers in conjunction with their local fire department. The session taught fire safety and ended with a visit to the fire station. The program was so popular they had to do several more sessions to accommodate all the interested families. I would definitely be interested in a program like this if it were made available in my area!



Discussion

The results of research question one, related to existing curriculum that can be utilized for effective delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials for homeschooled children, clearly indicate that numerous online websites and handout materials are currently available for use. Responses to the survey instrument indicate that 73% of respondents have included discussion about fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials in their homeschool curriculum, 28% had made use of social programs’ materials, and only 17% utilized the United States Fire Administration’s website materials. Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated they had contacted their local fire department for assistance with fire

safety and emergency preparedness education information. Thirty percent of respondents indicated that they believed the effectiveness of utilizing social programs' materials were effective or very effective while only 12% of respondents found information from the United States Fire Administration's website to be effective or very effective. Of the respondents indicating they had contacted their local fire department for fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials, 37% indicated they found the materials effective or very effective. The research suggests that there are numerous websites already available for downloading or ordering curriculum to assist in presented effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials to homeschooled children. The research also suggests that homeschoolers are not well aware of the existing online resources available to them.

The results of research question two, regarding the barriers to delivering effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education programs in a homeschooled environment, indicate that while 73% of respondents indicated fire safety and emergency preparedness education had been included or discussed with their homeschooled children, less than half responded to all subsequent questions about structured curriculum being utilized at all. It can be deduced from these responses that while the respondents have indicated a clear desire and commitment to include fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials or discussions in their homeschool curriculum, the information from industry, the federal government, and local fire departments has not been made available or accessed at a sufficient level. Respondents indicated specific barriers to delivering effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education information include lack of access to materials, lack of knowledge that materials exist, and the lack of a convenient method for receiving fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials. Significant prior research performed on different fire safety

and emergency preparedness education program approaches has undoubtedly yielded many robust programs. The Boy Scouts of America has developed their own fire safety and emergency preparedness education program through an award program that utilizes age appropriate fire safety and emergency preparedness education curriculum and is available to members of their organization. According to Ubbink, “Adolescents gain their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a variety of ways” (2011, p. 63). This must be the approach to utilize for presenting fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials to homeschooled children so that age appropriate materials are presented to the target audience for the most effective learning to occur. Training Boy Scouts during a local emergency management training exercise was cited in an article in Emergency Management Magazine where the response to an F3 tornado in Wisconsin by Alex Rupp, who “provided direction to his siblings and then provided what protection he could to shield them from falling debris” (Maack, 2009). Byrne also notes that there is a difference between fire prevention and fire survival education (2008, p. 46). Tessinear commented that “when a department has a developmentally appropriate lesson plan in place, it can be more certain that a consistent fire safety message is presented to children...” (2011, p. 32) Two key factors are present in Tessinear’s statement: “developmentally appropriate” again places emphasis on knowing the target audience to induce effective learning and “lesson plan” indicates a consistent curriculum instead of the whim or current mindset of the presenter / instructor. The development of an age appropriate curriculum in a consistent lesson plan format is paramount to being able to deliver effective learning. Monk identified that the “creation of a coalition between the department and the schools system...” (2011, p. 63) could resolve a barrier to effective delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education. As demonstrated in the suggestions from the respondent group, partnering with homeschool cooperatives or coordinating

specific days for homeschool groups to participate in learning fire safety and emergency preparedness education information together is attractive and conducive to enhanced learning. By increasing the reach of a station tour or visit to a larger group of homeschool children who are accustomed to traveling and learning together, children will be more likely to feel at ease in their environment and their group learning becomes more enhanced by benefitting from hearing questions from other attendees or participants.

Another potential barrier to delivery of effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials is the failure to identify special population groups or a different target audience. Homeschoolers are unique in that they do not have convenient access to the same information from the fire service as do children in public schools. The fire service must make adjustments to their materials and curriculum, including adjustments to policies about station tours or visits, and the expectations of fire safety and emergency preparedness education delivery. Russell identified that adjustments to fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials were necessary to better deliver information to children on the autism spectrum (2009, p. 32). Children of any age can be considered a special population group and the approach as such is important to effective fire safety and emergency preparedness education delivery. As recommended by Love, "... coordination with educators to determine key subject matters that are being delivered in daily education, so that the delivery by public safety professionals supports the efforts of educators of the elementary educator" (2009, p. 55) is important to the continuity of learning. Homeschoolers are typically not subject to a standardized curriculum, potentially yielding a more enhanced learning environment for fire safety and emergency preparedness education. Homeschoolers are more likely to have conducted education sessions and discussions prior to delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education by the fire

service, which helps improve the flow of information and retention by fitting in to their regular curriculum setting. Sullivan discussed the need of the fire department to expand its role to “that of a dedicated resource for public education programs, providing qualified instructional personnel, curriculum and education materials, and subject matter expertise not typically anticipated from the classroom staff.” (2005, p. 43).

The results of research question three related to potential effective strategies for delivery of fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials to homeschooled children, demonstrate that children must be involved along with their parents to fully assimilate the material. Tessinear indicated that when “children further discuss fire safety topics with their parents or caregivers, risk reduction planning is more beneficial” (2011, p. 29). Respondents to the survey indicated that their preferences for receiving fire safety and emergency preparedness education information revolved around three major categories: 71% desired online materials, 71% desired visiting a fire station, and 57% desired mailed materials. Access to these different types of information is not only well researched and justified in existing literature and research, but these selections fall into the expected outcome for homeschooling families. Homeschoolers are very resourceful in locating and securing curriculum, whether it is physical materials, online information for presentation to children, or through a field trip for an experience-based learning environment.

Recommendations

The purpose of the research was to establish the need for a fire safety and emergency preparedness education program that the Oak Hill Fire Department can utilize to provide education to homeschooled children. The results of the research provided data that homeschooling families have a varied approach to fire safety and emergency preparedness

education program delivery. The Oak Hill Fire Department should work toward developing enhanced access to fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials that meet the needs and desires of the members of the community who homeschool their children. The information that has been gathered can now be used to shape multiple approaches to offering fire safety and emergency preparedness education materials to the community members that homeschool their children.

The next step for the Oak Hill Fire Department is to overhaul its website to include a “kids’ page” that contains access to readily available curriculum and information about fire safety and emergency preparedness education information, such as <http://www.firesafekids.org>, <http://www.firesafe.org>, and <http://www.ready.gov>. These sites can be easily linked on the existing Oak Hill Fire Department website to provide immediate access to beneficial and useful information about fire safety and emergency preparedness education.

The Oak Hill Fire Department should also improve its presence in the media, both in print and online, so that citizens in the community know how to reach the fire department for fire safety and emergency preparedness education assistance as well as scheduling fire station visits or tours. The Oak Hill Fire Department needs to provide a more robust hand-out material collection to pair with a defined curriculum to utilize during fire station tours and visits. While the Oak Hill Fire Department currently supports fire station visits and tours, no formal curriculum or lesson plan has been developed to ensure consistent and adequate fire safety and emergency preparedness education information is being disseminated.

The department should also be prepared to be flexible when requests for assistance with fire safety and emergency preparedness education information are received. The research suggests that homeschooling families are accustomed to determining their own most effective

education style and curriculum, so the response to fire department contact from this group cannot be considered in a “one size fits all” approach. Flexibility will not only help more people access fire safety and emergency preparedness education information, but it will also make the learning environment and support from the community even stronger.

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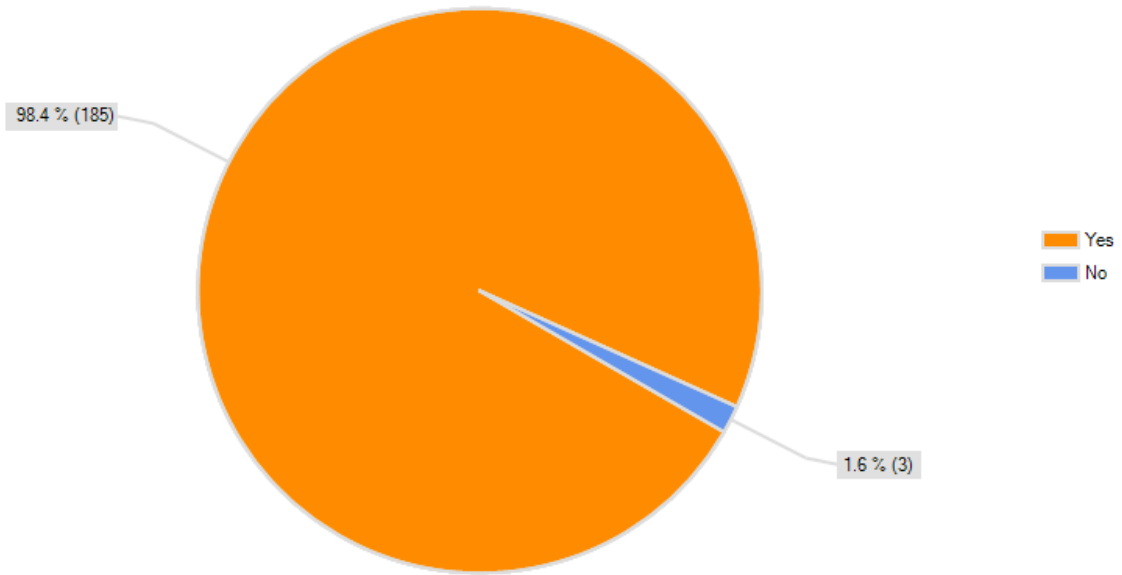
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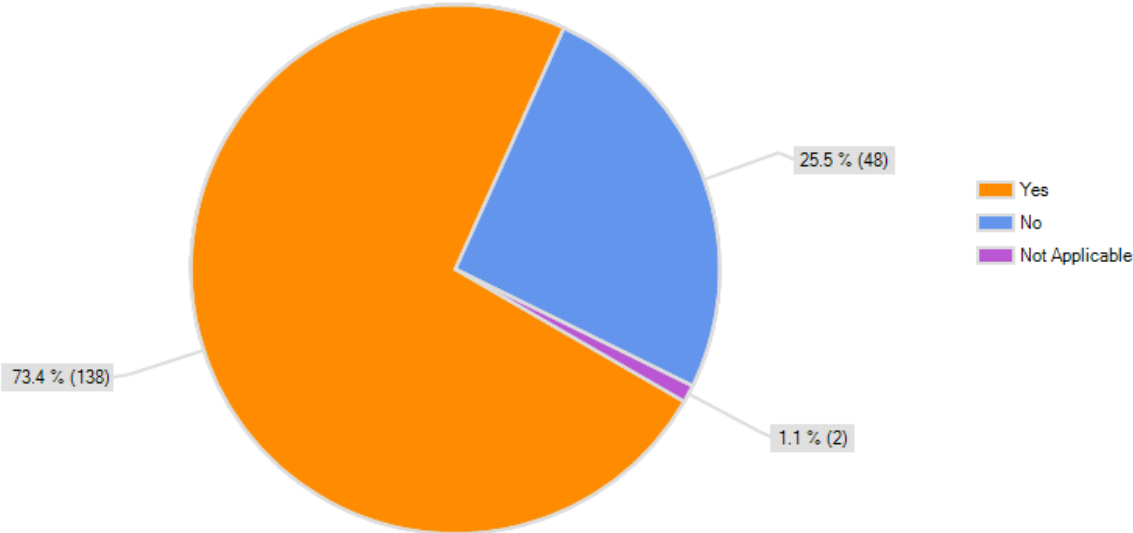
Appendix A

Do you currently or have you previously homeschooled your child(ren)?



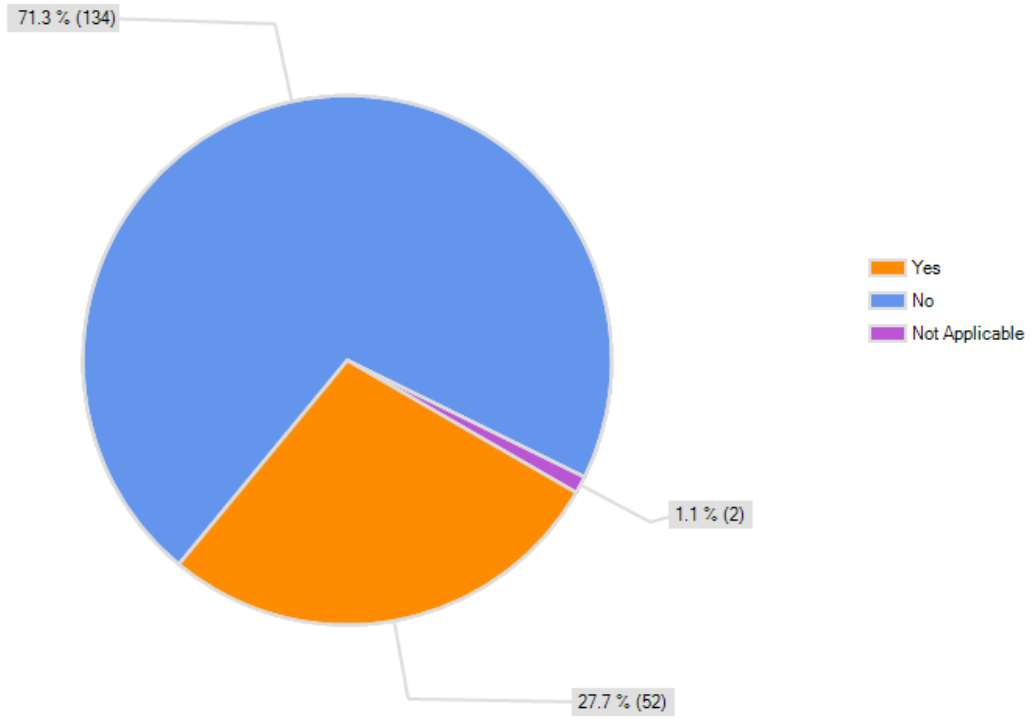
Appendix B

Have you ever included education or discussion about Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness in your homeschool curriculum?



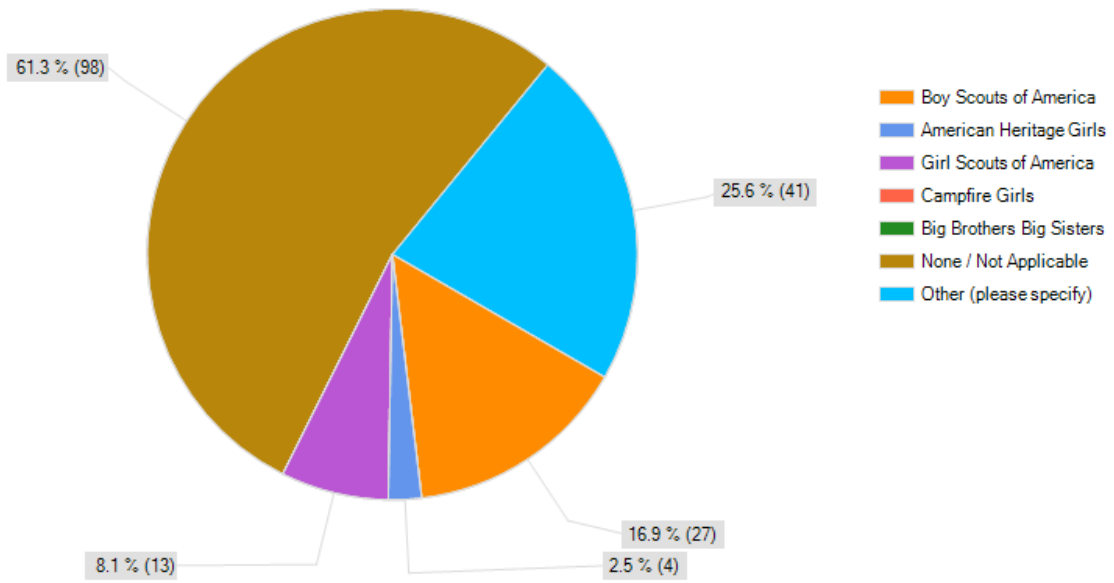
Appendix C

Have you used any Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness curriculum from other entities or social programs (Boy Scouts or America, American Heritage Girls, Girl Scouts of America, Campfire Girls, Big Brothers Big Sisters, etc.)?



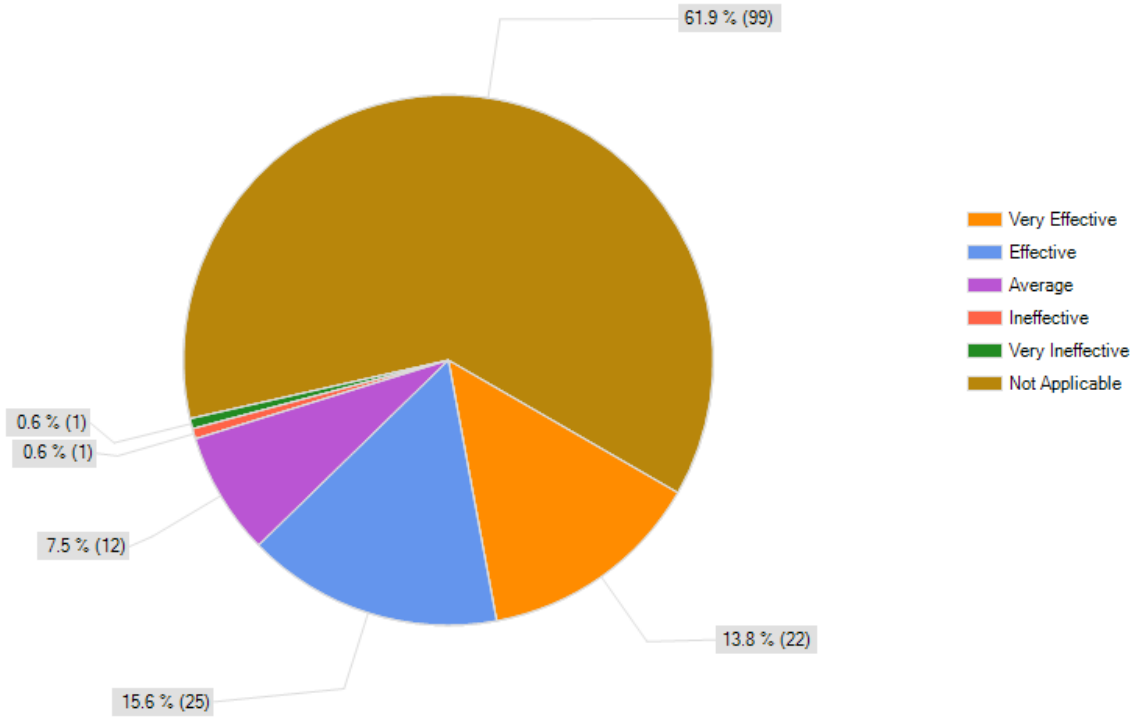
Appendix D

If you have utilized curriculum from another entity or social program, which entity or program(s) did you use? (multiple answers are accepted)



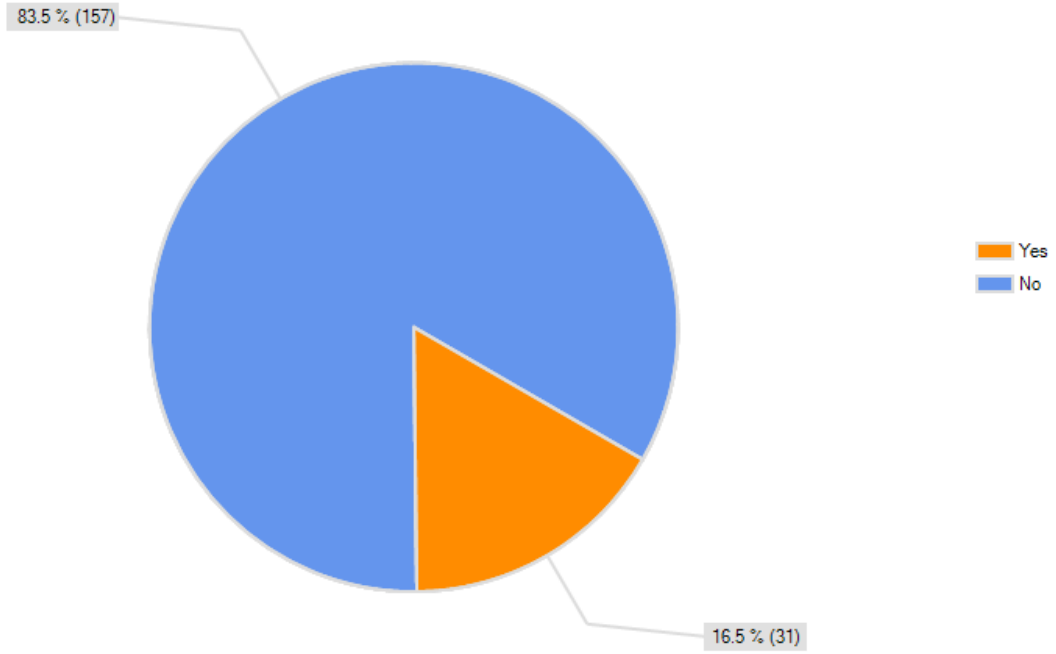
Appendix E

If you have utilized information from one of these entities or social programs, how effective or useful was the information you received or presented to you?



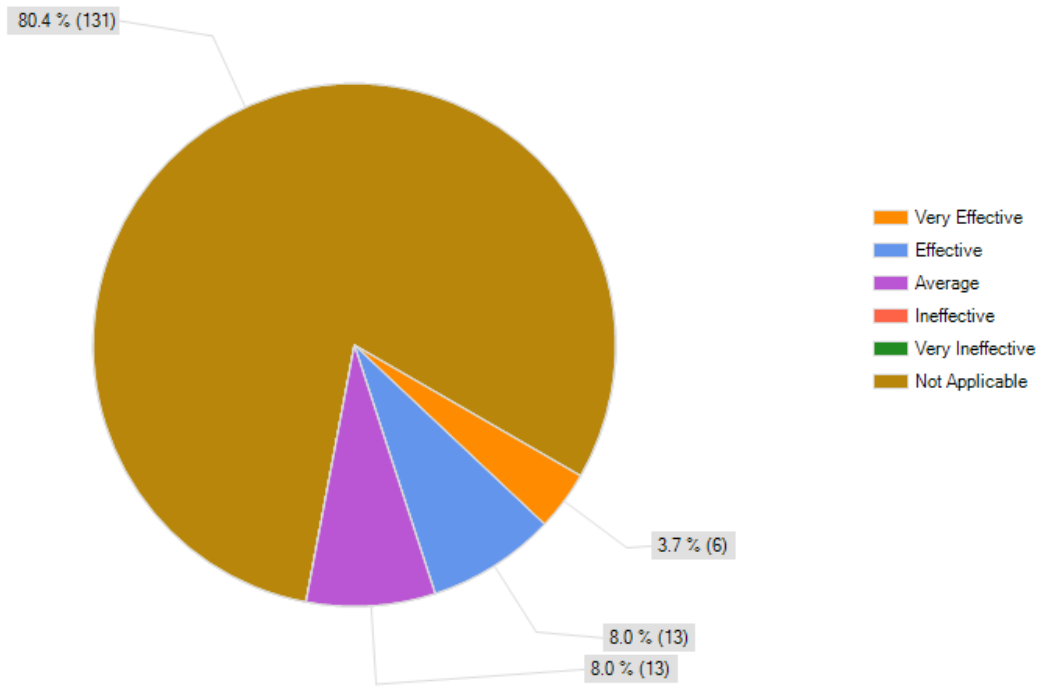
Appendix F

Were you aware of or have you previously utilized information from the United States Fire Administration website for Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness information (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/kids>)?



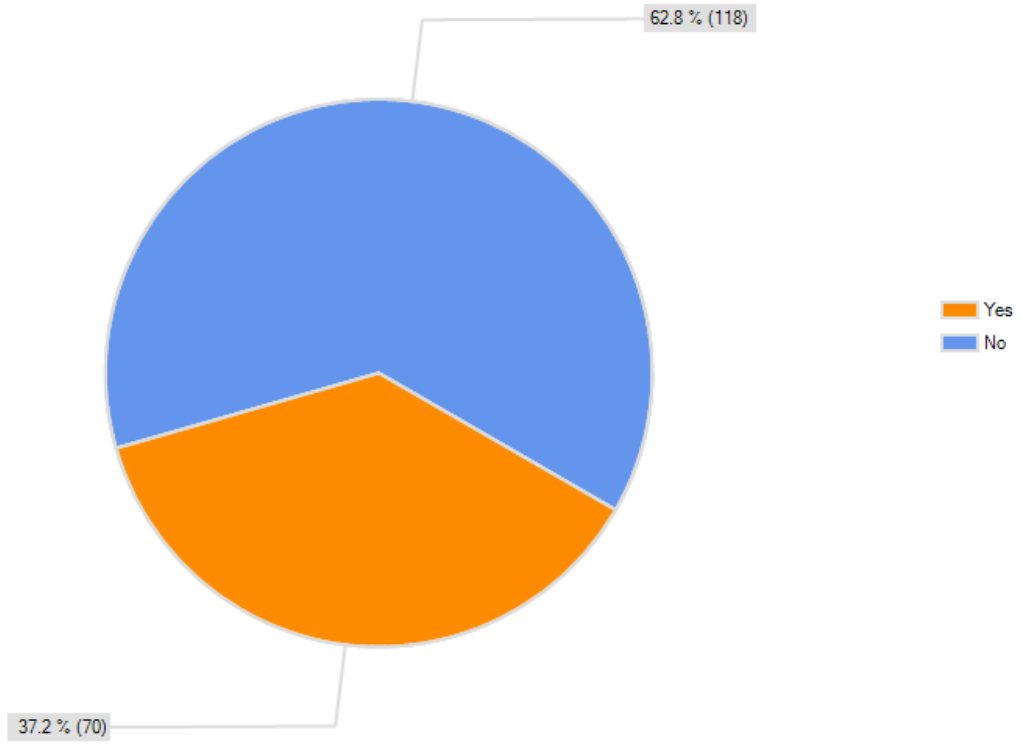
Appendix G

If you have received or viewed information from the United States Fire Administration, how effective or useful were the materials?



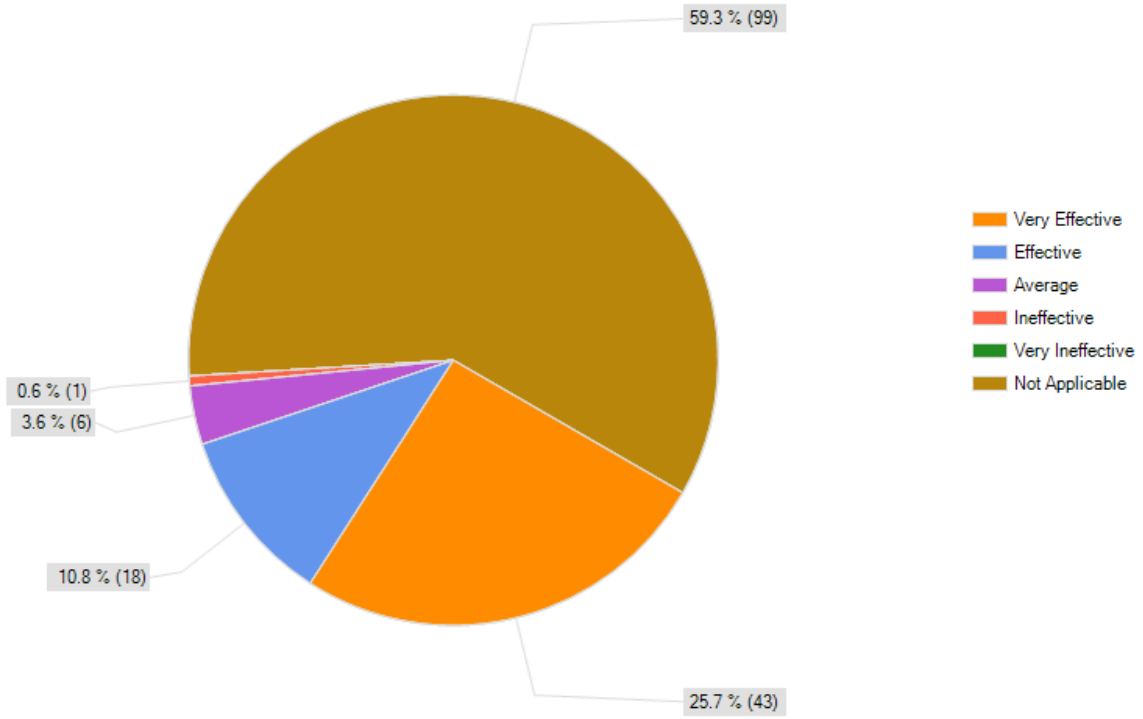
Appendix H

Have you ever contacted your local fire department for assistance with Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness information?



Appendix I

If you have contacted a local fire station for Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness information, how effective or useful was the information you received?



Appendix J

If Fire Safety or Emergency Preparedness information were to be made available, how would you be willing or prefer to receive this information?

