

The Clown Club

Protocol Safety¹

Part of Risk Inventory & Evaluation
RI&E

¹ Updated December 2019

1. Introduction

Children are developing at a fast pace, they are curious and want to discover and explore the world around them. They are not fully aware of the dangerous situations involved in this. The older the child gets the better they learn what is allowed and what is not and what can be dangerous. Therefore, it is important that all staff members of The Clown Club practise safe behaviour with the children; being consequent and repeating rules are essential in this process.

Creating a safe environment is important, because for the teachers it is impossible to keep an eye on all children every second of the day. It is also important to have a mixture of safety, challenge and learning moments for the children. This means that it is not possible to eliminate all safety risks. The risks have to be reduced to an acceptable minimum though and the chance of serious injury has to be prevented. This protocol is made as a part of the 'Risk Inventory en Evaluation, RI&E, which is evaluated every year at The Clown Club. It describes the way of working and the measures taken in each area of The Clown Club, so that all staff members are familiar with these and bring it into practice.

The behaviour of the children and the accidents that happen in daily practise define a big part of this safety protocol. It also determines how acceptable the risks in and around The Clown Club are. Every day can bring new risks. Incidents that do not seem harmless today can turn into a total different situation tomorrow. It is important to inform each other of actual accidents and situations that occur or could happen. Therefore, registration of accidents and danger is of great importance. This will also give a good representation of the safety in and around The Clown Club. All staff members should keep track of accidents that happen with children in the 'Bumps and Scratches' list.

Safety has a dynamic character, especially in an environment where children experiment and discover. So, it is of great importance that also the products are safe. However, if a product is not used the way it should be, an unsafe situation can arise.

Also, fire safety is an important part of the safety. The maintenance of the building, regular check of fire equipment and educating staff members as first aid responders and 'BHV' ers' contributes to guarantee the fire safety.

"The Clown Club House rules" have been formulated to minimize safety risks. Also, other protocols and policies have been formulated to ensure the safety of the children at The Clown Club, such as the **"Outside play policy"**, including the **"UV-policy"**. We believe that adequate behaviour concerning safety will minimize and prevent safety risks. These policies and protocols are to be followed by all staff members.

2. Safety risks

2.1 General

In The Clown Club there are different areas that have to fulfil certain safety criteria, namely:

- entrance
- sleeping room
- living room
- outside play area
- sanitary children
- sanitary adults
- kitchen
- office
- storage room
- environment

Each building, new or old, is changing continuously. Safety is an interaction between environment and the behaviour of the children and adults. There is a continuous inflow of children in the day care. Children can be unpredictable. Therefore, insight and experience with children are important to set up a safety plan.

The most commonly occurring incidents/accidents in this work field, concerning the physical safety are:

- falling
- stumbling
- slipping
- bumping
- choking
- bites from insects
- poisoning
- cot death

2.2 General rules and agreements

All staff members of The Clown Club need to follow the following rules and agreements.

- 1) Always be aware of: defects on furniture, toys and play material (inside as well as outside area), presence of irregularities (also outside, for example roots of trees), sharp edges, defects on fences, presence of broken light bulbs, length of cords on window decoration (blinds), presence of cords on toys, presence of cords on coats and/or caps.
- 2) Remove obstacles out of the walking route.
- 3) Replace (request replacement of) broken light bulbs immediately.

- 4) Make sure that sockets are equipped with safety plates and the doors with safety strips.
- 5) Follow the "Outside play protocol", including "UV-protocol", "The Clown Club house rules", the instructions to prevent cot death, the Health protocol and this protocol.
- 6) Report accidents on the list meant for this, the "Bumps and Scratches" list is present in every group.
- 7) Do not leave bags, cigarettes, matches, medicines etc. lying around. Address this to colleagues and parents if they are doing this.
- 8) Children are to walk inside (hallway/corridor/rooms), running is only allowed outside. This way falling and bumping are minimized.
- 9) Prevent that the children can slip on slippery/wet floors for example because of the presence of sand, water, snow, ice.
- 10) Put cleaning products, alcohol and lotions high or behind closed doors, where children cannot reach.
- 11) Make sure that children are not digging or playing in trash cans.
- 12) Do not let children throw with things in the rooms. There is a possibility that something could break into pieces (for example light bulbs), so children can hurt themselves.
- 13) Do not leave small objects lying around.
- 14) Make sure carpets etc. are laying flat (no folding, creases etc.), to prevent falling and slipping.
- 15) Make sure children can not burn themselves with hot water (tap), hot tea/ coffee or other hot consumption.
- 16) Hot drinks may only be drunk out of cups which can be closed to prevent accidental scalding.
- 17) Do not use sprays (deodorant spray, air refreshing spray) in the presence of children (because of gasses).
- 18) Doors with door-closers must always be closed because of fire safety.
- 19) Always close the gates behind you (inside as well as outside).
- 20) Be sure that beds and the playpens are closed properly.
- 21) Put cutlery (especially knives and forks) out of reach of children.
- 22) Be alert that children do not play with plastic sacks/bags and put them over their head.
- 23) Check regularly if pacifiers are intact, no bursts.
- 24) Radiators and heating pipes are equipped with coverings, but it is important to be alert on defects of the covering. When there are defects, children might burn themselves on the hot radiators and/or heating pipes. The children can also get stuck with their hand in the covering.
- 25) Be alert that children do not choke on their food (eat calm, small pieces, do not let them cram their mouths full). And for babies: stay close to the child when the child has just started eating solid food.

3. Work methods per area

3.1 Entrance

Children can fall and/or slip on the outside staircase. All teachers have to be alert for this and should take the measures needed.

Work methods:

- remove ice and snow, sprinkle salt
- supervise children when they use the staircase
- do not let children play on or near the staircase
- After playing in the sandbox, immediately remove the sand present in the corridor/hallway (also on the 1st floor), this is to prevent a slippery floor.

The inside staircase, to the 1st floor, also involves some risks, particularly falling and stumbling.

Work methods:

- supervise children when they use the staircase
- make sure children walk on the 'right' side of the staircase (the so-called "wide side", so they can hold and follow the handrail)
- make sure children hold on to the handrail
- practise going up and down the stairs with the children who are not yet able to use it properly

In the hallway children can fall, stumble, slip away for example because they are running, because of irregularities, obstacles (buggies), wet floor or sand on the floor. Children and adults can also injure themselves because there is not enough light (light bulb is broken). Children should be under supervision when they are in the hallway.

Work methods:

- no running in the hallway
- remove irregularities, obstacles
- replace broken light bulbs immediately
- clean up sand after playing outside
- if the floor is wet, dry the floor. Place the yellow, wet warning board where adults can see that the floor is wet and thereby can warn their children as well.

3.2 Sleeping room

It is important to check the beds regularly for defects, e.g. splinters, bars being loose and broken bed bottoms. Teachers need to be alert that the gates of the beds are closed well, so the children can not get stuck or fall from their beds.

Work methods:

- check beds/stretchers regular on possible defects
- put the 'oldest' children in the lowest beds
- do not put things in the beds children can stand on
- do not put a chair close to the bed and/or window
- children are not allowed to take toys with them when they go to bed
- always close the gates of the beds
- if possible take the children out of the bed when they are awake
- if the older children are ready for it, let them sleep on stretchers
- check the sleeping room/ area during sleep time on a regular basis, for example every 15 minutes

Especially in the younger groups it is important to make up the beds short. The child should lie in bed with their feet touching the end of the bed. This way the child can not come under the sheets. Another important point to mention is: *let the younger ones sleep on their back*. When parents want their child to sleep on their tummy, then parents have to fill out the form meant for this ('tummy-sleep' form). This also applies to children who sleep on their side with a side sleep cushion.

Pay attention to the clothes children are wearing when they go to bed: no cords and/or caps, not dressed too warm. Do not give pacifiers with (long) cords when children go to bed. Always remove hair clips, bows etcetera when children go to bed. If there are cords present on the window decoration (blinds) tie these up high.

The temperature in the sleeping room is very important (see "Health protocol"). Make sure children are not dressed to warm. **Read and follow the instructions preventing cot death.** Ventilate the sleeping room every day and during the times the children are using the sleeping area!

Work methods:

- tie up cords of window decoration high
- no clothes with cords or caps in bed
- no pacifier with a long cord in bed
- no clips, bows, ribbons etcetera in the hair when children go to bed
- use sleeping bags for the youngest children when they go to bed
- do not dress the children too warmly in bed
- keep an eye on the temperature of the sleeping room (the ideal temperature is 17°C; the temperature should not be under 15°C)
- Ventilate well: during sleep time open, the windows in the breeze position if possible; make sure that it is then not possible for children to

climb out of the window. The first shift turns on the ventilation system in the sleeping room and open windows in the living area.

To prevent that teachers and/or children can stumble: children are not allowed to take toys to bed, do not leave things on the floor of the bedroom; do not make it pitch dark in the sleeping room.

For good ventilation, the windows need to be open, always in a safe position so that children can climb out of the window. Do not put chairs close to the window.

Lift children under their armpits when you take them out of bed, with your hands around their waist or under their bottom. This is to prevent physical injuries to the child.

3.3 Living room

When children play they can be very enthusiastic and into their play. Children then can be unaware of their environment, with consequences of falling, bumping and stumbling happen a lot. The age and the developmental stage a child is in, can also contribute to frequently falling, bumping and stumbling, for example when they start walking. Also suffocating, choking and getting jammed can happen often in the living/play area

Children are curious, they explore and try everything. Since they are in the living area a big part of the day, it is important to take the measures below, so we can keep the living area as safe as possible.

Work methods:

- clean up toys after use
- separate walking space and playing space from each other
- create sufficient walking space between furniture
- round off or cover sharp edges and points
- make sure the floor is not wet, no sand on the floor, children are not allowed to walk on a wet floor
- make sure that there are no things children can stand on close to the windows or in the play pen
- tie cords of window decoration high up
- replace broken light bulbs immediately
- check furniture regularly for defects
- put cleaning products in closed cupboards or put them high and out of reach of children
- put personal bags (with for example cigarettes, lighters, medicine) away so children can not reach them
- make sure that playpens are closed properly
- do not let a child climb in and out the highchair without supervision

- put a highchair in a way the child can not push himself off the table and can fall on the floor
- fasten children with a safety belt in the highchair or use a loose seat/chair reducer and put active children close to a teacher
- in the living areas with a kitchen area the teachers must make sure that children can not reach the water boiler and the cables

The windows in the living rooms are equipped with safety foil but still the teachers must make sure that children play calmly if they are playing near the windows. There should be no possibility that the children can stand on something close to the window. When children are in the room the windows may only be open to the breeze position. On the 1st floor the windows are equipped with a window security system, so that it is only possible to open the windows in breeze position.

Make sure in groups with mixed ages (e.g. 2-4years), that the toys with small parts are put away in a closed cupboard or box. You can also plan separate or different activities for the younger and older children in the group. When they play together, let them play with the toys of the younger children or a teacher should supervise or join the play.

3.4 Outside play area

The outside play area is a place where children can let themselves go and move. For example they can run, ride on bikes, go off the slide, climb, and play in the sandbox. Usually this is a busy play moment for the children and they get into there game completely and can forget the environment around them. Falling, bumping, stumbling can happen instantly. To create a safe, but at the same time challenging situations, it is important to take some measures.

Work methods:

- follow the “Outside play protocol”
- check the outside play area for litter and faeces of e.g. cats, in the sandbox
- inform the office about defects concerning the fence
- sweep the playground when there are puddles
- make sure there is enough supervision, this means that the teachers should be all over the playground, so there is a view on all the children and corners
- on sunny days put sun cream on, t-shirts, caps on the heads, let children play in the shadow if possible, **see “UV-protocol”**
- do not fill in water pools deeply (drowning danger)
- children are not allowed to pull off leaves from the hedge
- make sure you close all gates behind you
- pay attention that children are not climbing on and/or over the fence

- when children are playing in the sandbox a teacher has to stand near the gate
- always keep an eye on the slide
- do not let children play wildly/too active near big play objects, e.g. slide
- make sure younger children are not getting caught up in the wild/active play of the older children
- during outside play teachers should supervise children and give structure in the space the children are playing, especially when the older children are playing actively
- use the schedule “Outside Play Schedule”

3.5 Sanitary children

Children are active and faster than you think, also at the changing table. Children can fall down, also when they are using the staircase of the changing table. When children use the toilet, they can slip on a wet floor or stumble over toys they brought with them. That is why the next rules must be followed:

Work methods:

- Never leave children alone on the changing table.
- Make sure that everything you need to change a child is within hand reach and ready.
- When children are using the staircase of the changing table, support them when they are climbing up and down.
- Replace broken changing cushions immediately, buy a new one due to hygienic reasons and because of plastic material they can put in their mouth.
- Do not let the children go alone to the toilet, if this is not possible, make sure that you know that a child went to the toilet
- If the floor in the toilet is wet (because of children’s urine, or splashes of water) dry the floor.
- Do not let children take toys or other material to the toilet

3.5.1 Sanitary adults

Work methods:

- lock the door to the toilet downstairs with the hook on the outside of the door
- the gate on the first floor (before the entrance to the toilet) is closed, so the children cannot get into the toilet upstairs
- make sure children can not reach cleaning products and sprays

3.6 Kitchen

Downstairs every group has a kitchen area in the room, without hotplate or oven. Upstairs, the kitchen is separated from the room, because there is a hotplate and an oven present, both electric. Children are not allowed in the kitchen upstairs (due to the presence of a hotplate and oven).

Work methods:

- Due to the presence of a hob and oven (both electric) in the upstairs kitchen, children may not be in the kitchen.
- Make sure that the gate to the kitchen upstairs is always closed.
- The only water boiler in the building is located in the upstairs kitchen. This should be placed where no children cannot reach it and/or the cord.
- Hot drinks are to be in closed cups and not dunk in the vicinity of the children. The cups should be placed high and out of the reach of children.
- Put sharp cutlery high so it is out of reach for children.

3.7 Office

Risks for children are also present in the office, because of materials not meant for children (for example ink). Children are not allowed to be in the office alone. A teacher or parent should be present. When an office member is absent for a longer period of time, the office is to be locked.

Work methods:

- lock the office
- children are not allowed to be in the office alone

3.8 Storage room/ Teacher room

Children are not allowed in the storage room. Cleaning products and washing machine are present here, which can be dangerous for children.

Work methods:

- always locked the door of the storage room with the hook
- the first-floor gate to the storage/washing room must always be closed
- do not take children with you into the storage room, not even to quickly bring or pick up a wash

3.9 Environment

When children are brought in or picked up, the parents are responsible for the children. The teacher has to make sure that the child is going with the parent. During a field trip the teachers are responsible for the children.

Children are very adventurous and they do not always see danger. So, it is important to follow the protocols meant for this and to take the next measures.

Work methods:

- During field trips enough supervision should be provided (see also “Outside play protocol”).
- Make sure that children are holding a rope during a field trip (for example going to the library), that they walk behind each other with a teacher in the front and a teacher in the back and, if possible, a teacher in the middle.
- The teachers should set the right example to the children regarding traffic rules.
- Children have to be watched carefully.
- Make sure the gate to the public road is closed and locked when children are playing in the parking lot.
- Watch the gate to the parking lot, when playing in the sandbox, a teacher need to stand by the gate.
- Make sure children do not climb on and over the fence and gates.