

Director's Dilemmas  
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As an administrator, there will be situations that you never would have imagined that you would have to handle. Below is a list of situations that could potentially happen. When you get back home, brainstorm with your peers and staff to compile possible ways to handle these scenarios. Let nothing take you completely by surprise.

1. No water or electricity in the building
2. Disgruntled ex-employee tells you that they are going to call licensing with complaints about the center
3. Toddler sets off fire alarm by pulling the alarm station
4. Child takes down fire extinguisher and sprays it
5. Dead deer on playground had been hit by a car and thrown over the fence
6. Septic system backed up into center, pump broken
7. Neighbor cuts down trees and branches on his property, throws huge pile of them on your property
8. Neighbor's dog bites a child in the center's parking lot
9. Wind storms knock down a tree on the playground
10. Transport van gets in an accident, the van drivers fault
11. Parent forgot to tell us about a food allergy, child exhibits a reaction after eating it
12. Snow plough crew does not show up after a heavy snow
13. Parent does not put car in park, gets out, car hits building
14. Employee comes to work with severe facial bruises, says her husband/ boyfriend hit her
15. Terminated employee refuses to leave the center
16. Recently terminated employee's boy friend threatens to put a bomb in center
17. Person comes into center with a gun
18. Only half of your employees show up for work
19. A child tells you his dad was arrested at the house last night
20. After outdoor play, you find a child missing when you go back in the building
21. Child starts having a seizure
22. A child refuses to eat anything and tells his parents that the teachers did not feed him
23. If a child does not get his preferred toy, he threatens to wet his pants; he does, then laughs and tells teacher "now you have to change me"
24. A small very fast and agile child climbs the playground fence every time you go out
25. Child in parking lot with parent gets hit by a car

26. Child dies at center
27. You come into work and notice that playground equipment and toys have been stolen from the playground
28. Terminated employee harasses staff and vandalizes center, or your personal property
29. Child threatens to tell his parents that you hit him if you don't let him do what he wants
30. Employee threatens to quit unless you ask a certain challenging child to withdraw
31. Staff member wants to date single enrolled parent
32. Parents have a custodial argument in the lobby in front of other parents
33. Terminated employee claims supervisor hit her, police arrive to investigate
34. Disgruntled ex-employee calls police and claims a staff member is drunk at the center. Police come to investigate
35. Staff member makes a "mistake" that impacts a child, giving wrong formula for example
36. Suicide of an employee
37. A long time teacher liked by parents and peers quits and walks off with no notice
38. Terminated employee calls enrolled parents and makes up lies about the staff and center. Solicits parents to let her watch their kids at her house instead of at the center
39. Serious injury of child on the playground
40. Threatened lawsuits from a parent over a very minor injury ( child fell running and cut chin)
41. Child is accidentally left at the park after a field trip
42. Parent acting inappropriately at the center toward their child or another enrolled child (yelling at them, physically disciplining them)
43. Parent of a terminated employee comes into the center and starts yelling at you for terminating their adult child
44. Rabid dog near playground fence, children going over to see dog
45. Teenagers walking by are verbally harassing the children on the playground
46. A parent steals a staff member's purse. Witnessed by another staff member but the parent does not know it was witnessed
47. Parent allows child to take home toys from the center because the child will act up if they are not allowed to take the toy. The toys are never returned
48. Parents arguing loudly in front of the children, using inappropriate language
49. Parent rarely brings in supplies for their child ( diapers, wipes, formula)
50. You hire an employee not knowing they have a serious learning disability
51. A staff member refuses to work with children who are ethnically different from them
52. A parent does not want their child transitioned to the next class because the teacher is ethnically different
53. Parent comes to pick up a toddler on a motorcycle, they have a helmet for the child
54. Parent is intoxicated or on drugs when they pick up the child
55. Child is five years old not potty trained and mom is still breast feeding

56. Staff members say inappropriate things to the children in front of other teachers (Ms. Smith is a mean teacher isn't she Ben?)
57. Power company show up to turn off your power, claims the bill was not paid
58. A parent confides to a staff member that their child has AIDS. Another parent hears and starts spreading gossip. Parents threatened to withdraw their children
59. An enrolled child has a terminal illness
60. A child knows all of the proper names for their private parts and announces to parents dropping off that he has a penis, do they have a penis? His mother is supportive of him doing this
61. A parent makes a sexual advance toward a staff member at the center
62. A young child who is not enrolled at the center approaches the playground. Says she is scared and can she come in and play.
63. A parent does not pick up a child. It is 8:30pm and the center closed at 6:00
64. A parent changes the people on the pick up list almost daily. The boyfriend of the moment is on again, off again. A parent with shared custody tries to get the other parent taken off of the pick up list
65. A man walking by the playground, indecent exposure
66. When you open in the morning two non enrolled children are sitting on the porch, no parent in sight
67. School age child threatens to burn down the center, pulls a lighter out of their backpack and sets some paper on fire
68. Parent pulls out of the parking lot at a high rate of speed. Child is unrestrained, standing on the front seat
69. There is not enough money in the centers account to cover payroll
70. Parent arrives to pick up child, boy friend arrives right behind her and starts beating her up in the parking lot
71. Police show up with a subpoena for a staff member

# Communication Do's and Don'ts

## **DON'TS**

Don't lose your perspective, no matter how many complaints you hear from staff and parents. Just because 10 people come to you with problems in one day does not mean that your hard work and efforts to keep the center running smoothly are useless.

Don't take the complaints personally. There will be times when you will be subjected to harsh, abusive language.

Don't jump to conclusions and start thinking about ways to resolve a problem until you have all of the details.

Don't tackle every problem that arises on your own. It may take a team effort to resolve.

Don't ignore the fact that one staff member's bad mood can affect everyone in the center, including children and parents.

Don't give yourself less credit than you deserve, no matter how many parents and staff may try to belittle your efforts.

Don't waiver from your number one objective. Never forget that your top priority is to provide quality care for the children.

Don't think you have learned everything there is to know. Each problem or complaint provides an opportunity to learn more.

## **DO'S**

Do understand that staff and parents who come to you with complaints are giving you a chance to make things right.

Do concentrate on getting all of the facts regarding a complaint before you make an attempt to remedy the problem.

Do remember that your own mood will affect the people you deal with. Even if you have other problems on your mind, never show your stress to others.

Do maintain your own self respect, dignity and professionalism, no matter how tough the situation may be.

Do ask yourself am I doing everything I can to address and solve this problem.

## TIPS FROM SUCESSFUL DIRECTORS

- ♥ Be autonomous. Learn to think for yourself and make good decisions. Treat the center as if you owned it yourself.
- ♥ Don't be afraid to make a mistake. When you do, learn from it and try not to do it again. Don't be afraid to admit your mistake.
- ♥ Work smarter not harder. Prioritize your day and learn to delegate jobs that don't require your expertise.
- ♥ Be customer service driven.
- ♥ Treat your staff with fairness and dignity at all times.
- ♥ Be a team player. Help others whenever you can.
- ♥ Learn to listen and respond. Someone just might know more than you. Try new things and be open to constructive criticism.
- ♥ Work hard, but learn to balance your home and family.
- ♥ Never get complacent. Be eager to learn something new every day. Have a positive attitude and be flexible.
- ♥ Don't let problems linger, take action.
- ♥ Know your competition and your community.
- ♥ Take care of yourself. You can't be good for others if you're not good to yourself.