Keeping Children Safe: Rest Time

As a teacher or caregiver, you are responsible for making sure children are safe at all times—even while they sleep. Read the following scenarios. Then write what you would do in each situation.

1. It’s 1pm on Tuesday and all of the children in Patrice’s room are finally asleep. Her co-teacher, Sonya, is in a planning meeting in the office. Patrice sits down on the floor between two children and gets out her lesson planning form. She begins to work on next week’s lesson plans. She hears Dante begin to cough. She looks over to check on him and sees that he has lifted his head off the cot. She waits a second to see if he lays back down, but he suddenly begins vomiting on the floor. She rushes over to him.

   a. What should Patrice do to help Dante?

      First, Patrice should go to Dante and check that he is ok. She should assist him to the restroom. She should call another adult to help her follow procedures for assessing and isolating sick children.

   b. What should Patrice do to keep the other children safe?

      Patrice should immediately call another adult for help. She should use the phone, walkie-talkie, or other system her program uses. She should follow appropriate procedures for cleaning and sanitizing the cot, floor, and contaminated materials. She should be sure to use proper hand washing procedures.

2. Clara and Melanie look out the window of their preschool classroom as the children sleep. “The sky looks so weird today,” Clara says out loud. As if on cue, she hears the tornado sirens begin to sound. Several children sit up and begin to cry. Other children appear to be sleeping right through the noise.

   a. What should Clara and Melanie do to keep the children safe?

      Clara and Melanie should turn on the lights and quickly, calmly, and firmly wake the children. They should address children by name, so they know they have each child’s attention. They should give short clear directions: “Line up at the door” and “We are going to the basement/safe zone.” Before leaving the room, they must count and recount the children. They must remember to take their emergency kits (emergency medication, first aid kit, etc.) and their class roster. They should reassure the children that they are safe. They should move the children to the safe zone as quickly as possible.
3. Rest time is almost over in Juan’s classroom. Most of the children are awake and laying quietly on their mats. Juan’s co-teacher is scheduled to return to the room in 5 more minutes, so Juan begins preparing the room. He notices Desmond is awake, so Juan kneels down next to him. “You ready to get up and get a snack, buddy?” he asks. Desmond nods and begins to sit up. As he does, he stares into space and drops back onto the cot. The left side of his body is jerking uncontrollably.

a. What should Juan do first?

   *Juan should remain calm and note the time the seizure began. He should make sure there is nothing near Desmond that could cause injury.*

b. What should Juan do next to keep Desmond safe?

   *Juan should call for immediate help. Unless Juan is aware of an emergency care plan for Desmond that states otherwise, Juan should call 911 or direct another adult to call 911 immediately.*

c. What should Juan do to keep the other children safe?

   *Juan should remain calm. Desmond needs Juan’s full attention, so another adult should come help supervise the rest of the class. Until help arrives, Juan should continue to visually monitor the room while staying next to Desmond.*