

## “Safety for the Gymnastics Class Instructor”

### *Obstacle Courses / Floor Areas*

1. Close spaces between mats – no gaps
2. Make sure all potential hazard areas are matted / padded
3. Use caution when using carpet squares or other place holders as markers, they are slippery
4. Place wedges short end or tall end against each other so children do not crash into ends or leave space
5. When using cylinders, octagons, and barrels make sure mats are snug against them to keep them secure
6. If using an A frame type ladder, place a cylinder under it (the cylinder acts as a safety net)
7. Make sure hard objects are removed from the bottom of wedge; in other words, don’t have children roll down a wedge and into a ladder or vaulting board
8. Make sure traffic patterns are clear and everyone is going the same direction
9. A water ski rope is a very safe trapeze; wooden, metal, and plastic dowels are very slippery even when wrapped with tape
10. Always use crash mats under a rope swing / trapeze
11. Remember an even landing area for the trapeze
12. Have a safe way down on all sides of high mats
13. When using ladders or planks be sure to have about 6” of them on the mat you’re using to support them
14. If using a plank as a slide it is helpful to have a lip on the underside, that way it doesn’t slide off
15. Make sure to have an inner and outer “ledge” on obstacles the children drop through
16. Landing from the trapeze into an octagon can be fun but, remember to spot the landing
17. Remember to leave pathways between the lines of equipment in the course
18. Mats not in use should be safely stacked and out of the way of children
19. Equipment such as ladders not in use are attractive nuisances (if a child can see it they will want to use it) and must be stored away or properly secured
20. Clean up body fluids immediately – yes, even from the carpet!



### *Gymnasiums / Gross Motor Development Areas*

1. If on a wooden floor, make sure it is dry (no baby spit-up)
2. Clean up any body fluids immediately, both off equipment and floor (Slips are very dangerous)
3. Beware of caregivers shooting baskets during class, missed rebound balls can hit unsuspecting children



4. When using parachute be careful if lifting parachute and allowing it to float onto children’s heads, sometimes it knocks them down
5. During parachute rides even though the children love to surf, remind them that it hurts when landing on a bottom—even one with a thick diaper!
6. During parachute rides, avoid sudden starts and stops
7. Socks are slippery on wood floors as well as on equipment

### *Vault Areas*

1. Always remember to check all spin locks
2. Be sure to close all gaps between mats
3. Make sure all potential hazard areas are matted / padded
4. Gaps between spring boards and mats should not occur
5. The horse should be low enough for the children to jump only about chest high down
6. If using a wedge at the horse, make sure it is snugly placed against the horse



### *Bar Areas*

1. Always remember to check all spin locks
2. Make sure ALL landing surfaces are well padded
3. Make sure all potential hazard areas are matted / padded (cable tighteners)
4. Bars should be low enough that children are only about 1” from the floor with body fully extended and toes pointed (chest high)
5. Metal bars are a better circumference for toddler hands
6. Make sure straps on rings, etc. hanging from bars are in good condition
7. Make sure ladder bridges suspended from parallel bars are very snug and the children have easy access to them (make sure boxes are stacked both securely and high enough). The parallel bars should also be the same height on both sides and low enough to act as rails for the children.
8. Cargo nets and rope ladders suspended from bars should be snug and not easily tripped over



### *Beam Areas*

1. Always remember to check all spin locks
2. Make sure all potential hazard areas are matted / padded (beam legs and supports)
3. Landing areas from beams should be well padded and free of any clutter
4. Beams should either be lowered or have mats stacked below them so they are no higher than chest level
5. Provide for safe mounting and dismounting

- Remember the safest place to spot a preschooler on beam is at their waist (their center of gravity)

### *Pits*



- Watch for little ones burying themselves and hiding in the Pit
- Reinforce proper landing techniques DAILY for students in language that they understand
- Educate parents to remove children from the pit by lifting them under the armpits

### *Trampolines / TumbITraks*

- Beware of children crawling under the apparatus
- Watch out for equipment stored underneath that might be hit during bouncing
- Make sure all potential hazard areas are matted / padded
- Make sure all springs are covered and properly matted
- Never allow unsupervised use on this equipment
- Do not allow toys on the equipment
- Provide for safe mounting and dismounting
- Train spotters so that no child falls off the apparatus



### *A Few Suggestions*

- Set up the gym – Obstacles Courses, Stations, Rotations, Activities, etc. based on the “lowest common denominator” class and have the instructors adjust the set up to accommodate their class, returning the set-up to this lowest common denominator.
- Beware of unsupervised babies crawling through, around, anywhere near your class
- Do not allow older siblings to participate in a class and run the risk of overwhelming and running over the little ones
- Children can also hide in gaps between mats and behind large dismount mats
- Toys such as bean bag toss are great, however some toys can be used as projectiles and weapons so watch for improper uses
- Sneaky parents with hot coffee and espresso drinks on the floor can cause a spill and possibly burn a child
- Parents with improper footwear, clogs, low/high heels can injure children if they step on them
- Unguarded purses and backpacks on the floor are definite slipping and tripping hazards

