



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
INTERNATIONAL



# PROMOTION OF SAFE AND PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS AT SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



# FOREWORD

## Responsible for content

- **Espiraes Consultoría de Infancia Team**  
Pepa Horno Goicoechea  
Content Creation
- **Coordinación OIR LAAM**  
Lucía Miranda Loría, Protection and OIR LAAM  
Programmes Coordinator  
Coordination, editing and revision
- **LAAM National Associations**  
Members of LAAM Regional Child Protection Network  
LAAM National Protection Focal Points  
Participation in the creation and review
- **Design and layout**  
Valeria Losoviz

## Development Process

- **Approved by:**  
Nadia Garrido, LAAM OIR Programmes Director

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Developing in environments that provide and ensure protection, as well as in spaces that include their particularities and allow them to grow in an integral manner are vital rights for children, adolescents and the youth. However, for the most part, our current society many times operates from a punitive and adult-centered perspective causing them to live in spaces that limit their ability to give their opinion and make decisions, as well as limiting their access and right to a warm and affectionate coexistence.

On this basis, the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that it is necessary to make commitments in pursuit of the necessary protection and care for the well-being of children and adolescents, considering the rights and duties of adults in charge. It also provides that those institutions responsible for the care and protection of children, adolescents and the youth should ensure those conditions.

That is why the Protective and Safe Environments Guide was created in collaboration with Espiraes Consultoría de Infancia, the SOS Children's Villages International Office Latin America and Caribbean Region together with the National Associations. This guide is created to provide inputs and tools to the coworkers of the organization based on the guarantee of safety and well-being of the persons under the age of 18 involved in the SOS programmes. In this way, some elements associated with the establishment of protective and safe environments included in these

organizational referents are:

- To grant an active participation role to children, adolescents and the youth.
- To motivate SOS coworkers to develop skills to contribute to the development and protection of the persons under the age of 18.
- To ensure that these coworkers have the necessary working conditions to properly contribute to the integral development and protection of children, adolescents and the youth.
- To establish active protection networks to ensure the protection of all the persons under the age of 18 who participate in the organization.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it recognizes the need for efforts that allow greater and proper development of spaces to ensure the safety and protection of children who participate in of SOS Children's Villages programmes.

That is why the Protective and Safe Environments Guide was created in collaboration with Espiraes Consultoría de Infancia, the Regional Office of SOS Children's Villages LAAM and the National Associations of the SOS LAAM region. This guide is created to provide inputs and tools to the coworkers of the organization based on the guarantee of safety and well-being of the persons under the age of 18 involved in the SOS programmes.

  
**Nadia Garrido,**  
LAAM Regional Programmes Director  
SOS Children's Villages International

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Article 3





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# INTRODUCTION

This Protective and Safe Environments Guide raises a number of items that will allow for the promotion of spaces that will ensure the protection and well-being of children, adolescents and the youth in SOS Children's Villages LAAM.

It includes data that allow the understanding of what is meant by a safe and caring environment and the way in which it should be interpreted and achieved, either from an adult perspective or the perspective of children, adolescents and the youth. It also poses the need for the establishment of protective and safe environments as guarantors of positive parenting and conscious affection in the development and growth processes of the persons under the age of 18.

All this is established within the framework of the organization and the conditions present in SOS Children's Villages LAAM. For a better understanding, these conditions are developed from four fundamental levels:

- **Level 1:**  
The protective and safe physical environment.
- **Level 2:**  
The protective and safe emotional environment.
- **Level 3:**  
The team: adult guarantors who are aware of the protective and safe environment.
- **Level 4:**  
Prominence of the people living in the environment, including the prominence of children and young people.



In addition, these levels explain how it is possible to achieve protective and safe environments in each one of them. Moreover, some indicators that will make it possible to identify if the conditions that guarantee a protective and safe environment for children, adolescents and the youth, and the elements that will allow a transformation of those spaces that do not comply with the conditions to achieve an adequate safety of the target group in the SOS Children's Villages programmes. These indicators are posed at the level of SOS Children's Villages offices, as well as in care alternatives and at the community level.

Finally, there are a number of conclusions and recommendations arising from the development of this Guide, as well as from the joint work with the Regional Office and the pertinent National Associations, which invite relevant aspects that will enable the Organization to strengthen and improve the quality of care provided to its participants.

## DEFINING A PROTECTIVE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

### 2.1. WHAT IS A PROTECTIVE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT?

The full development of a person at all levels: cognitive, social, emotional and physical is only possible if the person develops and lives in protective and safe environments. These environments are the ones that give them the affective safety that is the basis for full development. Developing in protective and safe environments is necessary for children, adolescents and the youth and for adults. A person is able to study, work, socialize, relax or strive to peak performance only when a person feels protected and safe. In a protective and safe environment their more primary brain capacities, the somatosensory skills developed by their reptilian brain<sup>2</sup> detect that there is no danger for their survival and thus a person's brain can go further and enhance an integral development that joins the different areas of their development together. In other words: when an adult, a child, an adolescent or a young person is afraid they cannot sleep well, eat well, feel pleasure, strive in a task, work, think or build links with other people. Fear is a priority because it has to do with a threat to survival. Full development, which is a universal human right, only comes when the person feels safe.

2. Siegel, D.; and Bryson Payne, T. (2011). *El cerebro del niño*. Madrid: Alba.

Difficulties usually appear when addressing the construction of protective and safe environments as an exercise of control: what can or cannot be done, what the rules, limits and regulations are... That is why many programmes and care alternatives base their educational project in a behavioral system of rewards and punishments, where the rules and the corresponding penalties are established by the internal regulations, and the order and hygiene become key elements of the educational work. The same thing happens in families where an authoritarian upbringing is based on controlling the behavior of the child or adolescent, while positive parenting promotes a way to educate in which families, caregivers or educators can base their upbringing in the emotional bond and respect to the times and processes of children, adolescents and the youth through a process of consciousness and self-care.

To promote protective and safe environments it is critical to understand this **difference between control and safety**. A person does not feel safe by controlling what they do or where they do it but surrendering to the experience. Any person, and especially a child, adolescent or young person that has been damaged tends to permanently control his/her environment as a survival tool. They know what they can or cannot do, how to manifest themselves and anticipate the reaction of others. They do it because their survival depends on it. A person feels safe when they no longer need to control the environment, when they can show themselves, when they are not afraid their environment will leave them or disappear at any time. When they can sleep without nightmares or without fearing what awaits them when they wake up. Safety is reached by surrendering to the experience of the present moment, not through the control of the environment where that experience takes place.

And in this sense, it is necessary to establish another clear conceptual difference. The difference between a protective and safe environment for an adult and for a child or adolescent. **The difference is precisely who can ensure this protective and safe environment**. Adults, as they are autonomous, can seek it by themselves, create it, promote it and take the necessary actions to protect themselves in the event they are aware of not being in a protective environment that poses a threat to their survival. But in the case of children, adolescents and the youth, they depend on one or several adults responsible for their care that can ensure that protective and safe environment of upbringing and coexistence.

**Difference  
between control  
and safety**

**The difference  
between a  
protective  
and safe  
environment  
for an adult and  
for a child or  
adolescent is  
who can ensure it**



This is precisely why a **system of protection for children or adolescents was created**: for times when families as a first instance of protection are not able to fulfill that role, when they cannot establish that protective and safe environment at home as guarantors of the full development of children, adolescents and the youth, the State becomes the guarantor of their safety and their full development through the social agents on which it delegates that function as it is the case of SOS Children's Villages.

A protective and safe environment for a child or adolescent will be the one that is able to generate a network of adults who are conscious, who consciously see the children, adolescents and the youth they live or work with and enable a protective and safe environment for them where they can stop controlling and begin relaxing, resting, sleeping, playing, growing, studying and fully developing. And that environment, which is the responsibility of the adult to create, is not created from the control of the behavior of children, adolescents and the youth, but from the **consciousness** present in the actions of adults.

Therefore, and to finish this paragraph, a **protective and safe environment is defined as a space of good affective treatment** that is free from any form of violence, abuse or exploitation and in which people are governed by the respect for human rights. In the case of children, adolescents and the youth, it is that environment where adults are always governed by the **best interest of the child, adolescent or the youth and the respect for their human rights**. A protective and safe environment is, therefore, the essential condition to guarantee the right of children, adolescents or the youth to their full development and protection and for any programme or initiative that wants to be developed from the **perspective of the rights of children as well the youth approach**.

## 2.2. THE PROTECTIVE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT AS A CONDITION FOR POSITIVE PARENTING

From this understanding, the promotion of protective and safe environments is related to other key concepts that are part of the organizational principles of any institution that performs its work from a human rights approach, as is the case of SOS Children's Villages.

Protective and safe environments are the condition that makes the development of the programmes of the organization possible following a positive parenting

Positive  
parenting

Positive  
discipline

Conscious  
affection

methodology or approach. This methodology serves to implement a programme development in accordance with the approach of the rights of the child, especially with regard to the right to full development, protection and participation.

**Positive parenting** is a consciousness and self-care process in which the adult creates that protective and safe environment and an affective relationship with the child or adolescent in such a way as to ensure their full development and protection. Within positive parenting, in addition, we refer to **positive discipline**<sup>3</sup> when reference is made to a series of specific methodological tools for non-violent conflict resolution and in accordance with the positive parenting principles.

In this way, and seeing them globally, protective and safe environments are the condition that makes it possible to work from this approach and positive parenting is the programme methodology, which will include positive discipline as a tool for solving conflicts. And to make all that process possible, it will be necessary to promote **conscious affection**<sup>4</sup> as an organizational competence for all existing positions.

An intervention from the approach of the rights of the child and the youth approach, requires ensuring that the environments where they develop are protective and safe environments. This guide is intended to be a technical reference on how to create or transform existing environments into protective and safe ones.

## 2.3. PROMOTION OF PROTECTIVE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENTS AT SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES LAAM

All the above is especially relevant when it comes to professional environments where an institution assumes the creation and development of coexistence environments. Not only within the protection system, which must ensure protective and safe environments for children, adolescents and the youth when families are unable to do so. It is relevant for those

3. Horno, P., y Romeo, F.J. (2017) *Afecto, límites y consciencia. La disciplina positiva en los programas de Aldeas Infantiles SOS*. SOS Children's Villages Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. Horno, P. (2017) *La afectividad consciente como competencia organizacional en Aldeas Infantiles SOS América Latina y el Caribe*. SOS Children's Villages Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.





those environments where people are going to live together with a **particular vulnerability**. Some examples of environments that should be ensured to be protective and safe environments are: hospitals, centers for the elderly or resources who work with people with disabilities. In all these cases, the vulnerability of some of the people who live in that environment can pose a risk to the guarantee of their right to protection and to full development, which does not always exist in other contexts.

This is the case of SOS Children's Villages, an organization that works with children, adolescents and the youth at risk or with stories of emotional damage. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize that to a child, adolescent or young person that grows with fear to live in contexts of vulnerability, it is difficult to fully develop, and they can suffer from brain development disorders due to lack of stimulation, exploration and playtime. They are people who have lived several violations of their human rights and that bring a load of **emotional damage** (and often also cognitive and social one) derived from such experiences. In this case, the institutional obligation to ensure that the environments that the organization creates, promotes or participates in are protective and safe environment is even bigger. And as an organization that works from a focus on rights of the child and the youth approach, it is obliged to ensure that **all its work areas: offices, community programmes, community homes or care alternatives are protective and safe environments** where children, adolescents and the youth regain their emotional security through the emotional warmth that adults consciously and systematically will bring to their lives.

SOS Children's Villages works from a rights of the child approach as well as a focus on the youth. One of its key objectives is to promote the full development of children, adolescents and the youth through the creation of alternative care environments and the family strengthening. To do this it must fulfill the condition to ensure that in both cases these environments are protective and safe environments. But this condition affects the entire organization, not only the level of direct care. Because for adults to systematically and consciously generate a protective and safe environment for children, adolescents and the youth with whom they work, they have to work in a protective and safe environment. Only this type of work environment will allow the full development of their professional skills and will provide them the emotional security safety they need for intervention with children and adolescents and the youth. In this way, **protective and safe environments have to be an ORGANIZATIONAL**

**Protective and safe environments have to be an organizational condition**

**CONDITION, not a matter relating to protection or limited to direct care positions.**

Only when coworkers at all levels, management, managerial and technical and direct care generate protective and safe environments in their fields of work, whether an office, a community-based care space or an alternative care, it will be possible to offer a quality intervention with children, adolescents and the youth. This process of creating protective and safe environments is directly linked to the development of conscious affection as an organizational competence at all levels of the organization.

This guide is intended to be a technical tool for **assessing the environments** where the organization develops its work at different levels that define an environment as protective and safe. These indicators will serve both to assess the existing environments and processes, promoting the **transformation processes needed** in them, and to unify the **organizational quality standards** in the work of SOS Children's Villages in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. And through these quality processes one of the priority objectives of the Organization will be achieved: to generate the necessary organizational conditions to guarantee the right of children, adolescents and the youth to a full development and respect for their physical and psychological integrity.

And just like the guide on conscious affection as a competence<sup>5</sup>, this guide was created with the aim to be a methodological guide support for this **organizational process** that will take time because it represents a **consciousness challenge** and transformation that will require investing human and economic resources as well as a clear and defined **organizational commitment**.

5. Horno, P. (2017) *La afectividad consciente como competencia organizacional en Aldeas Infantiles SOS América Latina y el Caribe*. SOS Children's Villages Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

**The organization is obliged to ensure that all its work areas: offices, community programmes, community homes or care alternatives are protective and safe environments**



## LEVELS OF A PROTECTIVE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

A protective and safe environment is structured on four levels that are interrelated:

### FIRST LEVEL: The protective and safe physical environment

A protective and safe environment is not possible without a protective physical environment built upon the needs of children, adolescents and the youth that coexist in it and of the adults in charge.

Within this physical environment, there are issues about the design of infrastructures, environments and materials. These are aspects such as access to electricity, kitchens and their facilities, materials, dangerous products, windows, doors, ceilings, sliding soils, adequate furniture adapted to the age and abilities that are cared for at home, the quality and hygiene of mattresses, hygiene conditions of bathrooms, etc. There are also guidelines on infrastructure, architectural design and materials that are listed in the quality standards developed for residential care and that should be applied to any work environment with children, adolescents, young people and their families.

6. Fernández del Valle, J. et al. (2012). *Estándares de calidad en acogimiento residencial: EQUAR*. Madrid: Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. Recovered from <http://www.bienestaryproteccioninfantil.es/fuentes1.asp?sec=3&subs=123&cod=1462&page>

Issues that arise: dimension of space and its physical distribution

But there are other kinds of issues that arise when you think from the perspective of the physical safety of the environments. Issues such as:

- Location of the care alternative or community space and safe access to the site. It is necessary for care alternatives to be integrated in the community and accessible to move around them. Locating care alternatives or community spaces in remote areas where access poses a risk to children and adolescents and the youth, in addition to hinder their social integration, should be avoided. The location should be close to social, sports, educational and leisure resources necessary to meet the needs of children and adolescents and the youth.
- Dimension of space and its physical distribution. The homes of care alternatives have to be small and adjusted to the number of children, adolescents and the youth residing in it, and they should preferably be inserted in the community and with easy access to community resources. If spaces are large and old buildings they may not respond to the needs of children, adolescents and the youth. In addition, it is important to assess the physical distribution of that space, it is preferable for it to be located on just one floor. If a care alternative of community space is located on two floors, it creates a need for coworkers to take care of both floors making it difficult to work as a team and favoring risk situations at particular times.
- One of the most sensitive aspects of the physical level of a protective and safe environment is the design of the bathrooms, whether at a home or at a community space. Thinking about where they are, how they are accessed or how their doors are. Bathrooms are places where privacy must be preserved, so their location and design are not just a matter of physical architectural ergonomics.







## The protective and safe emotional environment



## SECOND LEVEL: The protective and safe emotional environment

The physical environment may be physically safe, but if it is not loaded of affection in its design and organization, it will not be a protective and full development promoting environment for those who live in it. The physical environment level can be guaranteed in an alternative care or in a community space; however, it is possible that its design is cold and with little customization. The level of the emotional safety environment refers to all the elements necessary to provide emotional warmth to a physical environment, without which this environment will never be safe and protective. This process of transformation from a physical environment into a warm space that makes those who live in it feel protected and recognized, generating a sense of belonging to the place, is a process that happens unconsciously and naturally in the homes of protective families, that place photographs, frames, souvenirs, flowers, decorate the rooms, customize and decorate the spaces, but it is absent in households at risk. That is why, when defining a protective and safe environment it is necessary to consciously have included all warmth and personalization indicators of the spaces that are encompassed in this level of protective emotional environment.

However, this is one of the levels in which care alternatives fail more frequently, where the warmth is sacrificed for functionality, coldness or cleanliness. These are places with long and dark corridors, neutral colors or impersonal rooms. However, for children, adolescents and the youth in general warmth is essential, and especially for those who are in alternative care, as they are going to need a warm and safe environment to gradually ease their dissociative mechanisms. A care alternative should seek a physical sensation of WARMTH generated by providing the physical environment with a positive emotional load. The same occurs at community spaces, if families are intended to participate in activities in that space, it has to be a warm and personalized place. And, of course, any coworker in an office will want to give a touch of warmth to their place of work and customize it. This level of the protective and safe environment generates a feeling of belonging to the place.

### Spaces with warm and varied colors

### Custom spaces

### Take care of the decoration of the environments with elements adapted to children, adolescents and the youth

Some indicators to develop that emotional protective and safe environment are:

- The design of spaces so that the child, adolescent or young person can make the environment theirs:
  - Spaces with warm and varied colors.
  - Custom spaces for children, adolescents and the youth where they can perceive the identity of the person who inhabits the space: their photos, art work, different comforters or their stuffed animals and toys.
  - Take care of the decoration of the environments with elements adapted to children, adolescents and the youth, and not using homogenous advertising institutional elements (for example, corporate logos or advertising of the institution).
- The physical warmth of the space. Traumatic experiences cause temperature regulation problems and an emotional protective and safe environment has to be physically warm. This involves controlling temperature, but also the beds, linens and comforters of children, adolescents and the youth to be sufficiently warm and a natural light that enables such a natural warmth to the space.
- Play spaces. An alternative care programme or community programme must consider playing as part of the educational project because of its therapeutic character, resilience potential and emotional integration. It is not only about playing, but about offering opportunities and materials to play with sense. Efforts should be made to ensure non-prefabricated materials to allow symbolic play. Specifically, games related to building and hiding for all the symbolic work at home and for protection; games related to scenery or theater to give them the opportunity to create vital content, and games related to climbing to allow them to learn facing fear. Finally, to the extent possible, games that allow them to have contact with sand or clay that allow them to build or destroy as well as tales or images with which they can create their life story.



**The team:  
adult guarantors  
who are aware  
of the protective  
and safe  
environment**

- The availability of open spaces. Movement is a must to integrate disassociated contents and to handle disassociated rage. A care alternative or community programme must have spaces where children, adolescents and the youth can move. And, by definition, this criteria implies that a protective and safe environment will always have an open space to enter or leave in the case of care alternatives, therefore a programme of this kind that wants to be considered therapeutic or educational, in other words protective, has to be open, no doors should be locked, no bars on the windows, among other things, also because in case of fire it makes it difficult to rescue the children, adolescents and the youth who live inside. If bars or security measures are necessary, they have to be seen as measures that derive from the context of the country, so they are included as protection elements for the children, adolescents and the youth and not as control measures towards those who live there or towards the families that go to the community space.
- Contact with Nature. Nature has a therapeutic element of integration and emotional shelter; therefore, a vegetable garden, a hen house or a garden are and can be educational and therapeutic tools for the educational project of the center.



**THIRD LEVEL:**

**The team: adult guarantors who are aware of the protective and safe environment**

Any environment where people work, and especially those where work is done with children, adolescents and the youth and their families must have a technical team acting as the guarantor of that protective and safe environment. In the case of work environments with children, adolescents and the youth, that team must be composed of adults that consciously guarantee the fulfillment of the rights of children, adolescents and the youth to their full protection and development.

For an adult to consciously work, it is necessary to incorporate **conscious affection as an indispensable professional competence**, because it is impossible for a protective and safe environment not to be affectionate.



**To achieve the  
implementation  
of conscious  
affection as  
a professional  
competence**

Such affection can come up naturally or it can be consciously grown by the educational team as a professional responsibility.

Conscious affection as a professional competence includes five basic skills:

- Expressive affection, which is the capacity to express affection to the child, adolescent or the youth and to do it from an emotional and sensory adjustment based on the person they are working with.
- The ability to create positive affection links and keep consciousness regarding the already created affection links.
- Conscious care of planning and development in all phases of the intervention process with special attention to the initial and final stages.
- A conscious and respectful look at the person we are working with, especially when they are children, adolescents and the youth with a history of personal damage, as well as respect for their affection links with their families.
- Working with problems from the perspective of positive discipline without resorting to any form of physical or emotional violence.

SOS Children's Villages LAAM has developed a technical guide to promote conscious affection among all its staff, from managerial positions to direct care coworkers. There is a reference to it in this document.

To achieve the implementation of conscious affection as a professional competence, a series of other training and development strategies are necessary to generate the required organizational conditions for conscious affection to be assumed as an organizational competence. Other training and development strategies include:

- Creating self-care systematic spaces for coworkers,
- Promoting systematic spaces with technical supervision,
- Specific training options for each skill.





## A protective environment for the technical or educational team

Likewise, it is necessary to implement networking with other system resources as an organizational condition. Protective and safe work environments are created in that way for our own coworkers at all the levels of the organization. A **protective environment for the technical or educational team** is a necessary condition to develop quality care for children, adolescents and the youth.

If conscious affection is implemented as an organizational competence and protective and safe environments are guaranteed for the teams, projects and programmes can be structures in alternative care and at community and family strengthening programmes that include the **affective dimension as the spine of the project**. In this way, intervention is understood as being done through the relationship and any affection activity can be a **therapeutic educational activity because it is a connecting one. It all depends on how the coworker carries it out**. It cannot be left out that an educational work based on conscious affection strengthens the resilience skills of all people, adults, children, adolescents and the youth, and helps them ease their disassociating mechanisms<sup>7</sup>.

Projects and programmes that are developed at the care alternatives or in community spaces must include several key elements:

- Symbolic activities about the history of children, adolescents and the youth and their families.
- Quality therapeutic care for children, adolescents and the youth and their families. The therapeutic care of children, adolescents and the youth must include elements of the psychology of the link, systemic psychology, trauma psychology and third generation cognitive models. Likewise, it should take place in coordination with the other stakeholders of the national protection system for children as well as with education and health referents.
- Body work activities within projects for children, adolescents and the youth and their families, and for coworkers.
- Affection, sexual and equality promotion educational programmes.

7. González, A.; y Martín, N. (2017). *La circularidad y la figura educativa como elemento validante en la intervención*. *Revista de Educación Social*, 24, 872-879.



- Emotional shelter and accompaniment for affection crises in care alternatives or within families and communities and facing disruptive behaviors of children, adolescents or the youth as manifestations of damage to their development.
- The systematic care of the initial and final stages of any community strengthening programme or care alternative that is developed, as well as organizational processes lead by Management or Human Resources.

## FOURTH LEVEL: Prominence of the people living in the environment, including the prominence of children and young people

A protective and safe environment must include mechanisms for the people who live or relate in it to be the main characters of their own vital processes and of the community processes that directly affect them. An authoritarian environment based on control that hinders participation, initiative and the prominence of the person over the decisions of their own life, will never be a protective and safe environment.

Therefore, the level of prominence of the person regarding their own development serves for all intervening agents. A protective and safe environment would not be met in this level, for example, at an office where a managerial position forbids its team to participate at different decision-making levels; within a technical team, where direct care coworkers are not allowed to be part of planning or evaluation; an alternative care with children, adolescents and the youth who are not allowed to suggest activities to be carried out within the care environment.

This level of the protective and safe environment is common for adults, children, adolescents and the youth but since it is related to a technical tool created for SOS Children's Villages LAAM, we will have to discuss the prominence of children, adolescents and adults. In this level, indicators related to the participation of coworkers in decision-making processes at different levels of the organization will be searched for, like the participation of families within communities, and the prominence of children, adolescents and the youth with which SOS Children's Villages works on their own life.





An organization that works from the perspective of the rights of the child and the youth approach, has to include the prominence of children and the youth in all its levels of intervention. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes a child or adolescent must specially have the opportunity to be heard at any court or administrative process that directly affects them or to do so through a representative of appropriate organization. The same applies to the youth approach where adolescents and the youth are the main characters of their own development and of the social one (care environment, community, organization, etc.).

Also, the prominence of their own life allows children, adolescents and the youth to learn the self-protection tools, autonomy and resilience necessary to repair the damage in their life story and exercise their active citizenship.

## The prominence of their own life allows children, adolescents and the youth to learn the self-protection tools

Photo: @daniellepereira





# EVALUATION AND TRANSFORMATION INDICATORS OF PROTECTIVE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENTS AT SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

This section suggests a series of indicators for each level of a protective and safe environment. This system of indicators is born with the general objective of providing a quality standards system in the spaces where SOS Children's Villages works in LAAM. It also has two specific objectives:

- To evaluate the existing work environments of the organization and to promote the pertinent transformation and improvement processes.
- To promote protective and safe environments in the communities and families SOS Children's Villages works with in LAAM.

The list includes indicators that are very different from each other. Very specific indicators that have to do with the environments and equipment have been defined. Other broader ones are related to the organizational processes that have to be led by Human Resources and other indicators related to organizational structures.

Also, the following has been defined for each indicator to meet the two objectives that were pointed out (evaluation and promotion):

A minimum value

- A minimum value. That value is considered to be the one that the organization has to guarantee for any environment where SOS Children's Villages works in LAAM, whether existing or new. That minimum value is defined from two minimum criteria: to guarantee the protection of the person from any form of violence, as well as the provision of his/her basic needs.

A maximum value

- A maximum value. This value is defined from a broader concept of protection defined as the guarantee of good treatment, full development and full implementation of the rights of children, adolescents or the youth. It does not represent the minimum levels to be demanded from the environments where SOS Children's Villages works in LAAM, but the values that must guide the promotion and prevention work with a focus on the rights of the child, adolescent and the youth.

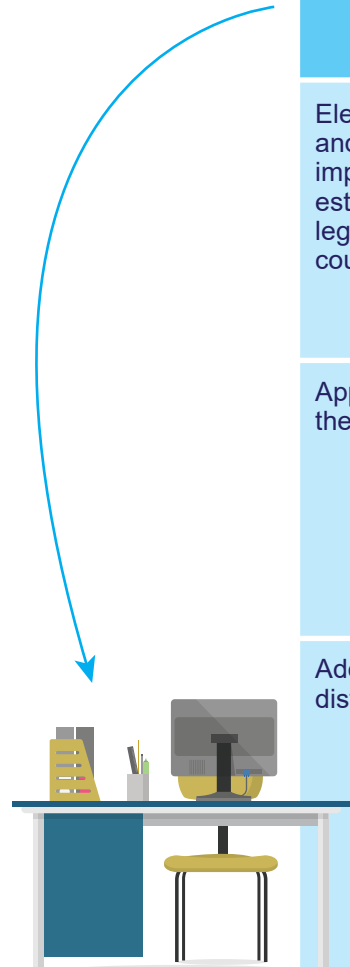
These indicators have been developed along with the consultant and the Child Protection National Advisors and Human Resources who attended a specific workshop in Medellin (Colombia) in June 2017. Likewise, they have been reviewed by a work team along with the Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean which includes the Protection Area, Programmes Area and Human Resources Area.

Three work areas of the organization have been defined to structure indicators:

- **SOS Children's Villages Offices.**
- **Care alternatives and spaces for the youth**, including traditional Villages (closed spaces), SOS families in communities (houses in the communities where SOS coworkers take charge of care), substitute families or Foster Care and care environments for the youth (youth communities or other spaces where the youth live, and SOS Children's Villages keeps supporting them)..
- **Direct care spaces in the community** (that include social centers and community homes).

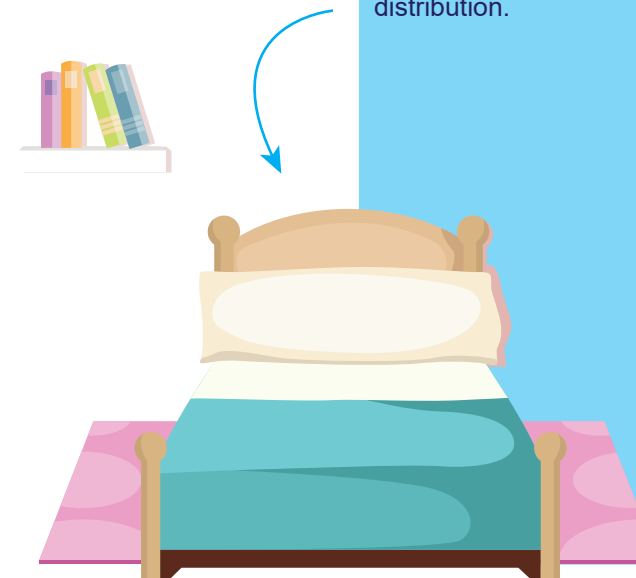
## 4.1. FIRST LEVEL: Protective and safe physical environment

### SOS Children's Villages Offices



INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Elements of physical and occupational safety implemented as established by the legislation of each country.	Compliance with the standards required by law.	Construction, electricity, water, sewages, protection measures against fire (evaluation routes, fire extinguishers, alarms...), security doors in risk areas and a first aid kit.
Appropriate location of the office.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Well-communicated location with easy access for coworkers. Location is close to the offices of the key organizations and stakeholders with which SOS Children's Villages works.
Adequate space distribution.	A space of 2 square meters per person and a number of rooms for meetings that is proportional to the staff that works at the office.	Different spaces for coworkers, with natural lights, meeting rooms that are proportional to the staff that works at the office and few halls for the office to feel collaborative and not segmented.  A one-story space.
Safe access to new technologies.	All are needed.	Content backup systems, technology access control, content filtering system.
Access adapted for people with disabilities.	A must.	All adaptability measures of the spaces are implemented (office access, adapted restrooms, internal areas, adapted furniture).

## Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages



INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Elements of physical safety implemented as established by the legislation of each country.	Compliance with the standards required by law.	Construction, electricity, water, sewages, protection measures against fire (evaluation routes, fire extinguishers, alarms...), security doors in risk areas and a first aid kit.
Safety construction.	All are needed.	Flat terrain, wooden or tile inclined, not very high roofs including easy access bars.
Adequate location of care alternative or environment.	Well-communicated so that they can access schools and sports and leisure areas of the community well. Play area: patio or green area.	Real integration with the community. Own nature area at the care location (house or location).
Adequate home space distribution.	Three children sleeping per room at the most. Rooms segregated by sex and age (children until the age of six, children from seven to eleven, adolescents and the youth). Babies younger than two can sleep with caregivers if necessary, but from that age on they must sleep in the appropriate room. Common study table. Living room area. Joint or separated kitchen and dining room.	One or two children sleeping per room. Roren until the age of six, children from seven to eleven, adolescents and the youth), but considering the possibility of combining ages and sexes when they are siblings or when they are connected by an affection link, sharing can be very positive for them.  A restroom inside each room.





## Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
	A restroom per every five children, adolescents and the youth.	Individual space for the personal belongings of each children, adolescents or the youth. A study table and chair for each child. Living room. Joint kitchen and dining room. One-story distribution, not on many.
Distribution of the space of the technical team and coworkers.	Separated area for coworkers. Guarantee a safe and private space for the record files of children, adolescents and the youth.	Separated area for coworkers. Rest area for coworkers and their belongings. Adequate computer and internet connection. Guarantee a safe and private space for the record files of children, adolescents and the youth.
Other specific safety measures covered for areas for children, adolescents and the youth.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Covered wall plugs. Hand rails on stairs. Access doors to the house. Restricted access to cleaning products and kitchen appliances. Doors that can be opened from the inside. Windows with emergency exits and upper opening. Restricted access to the first aid kit.
Bathrooms design adjusted to the needs of children, adolescents and the youth.	Restroom inside the house. Doors with an opening at the top and bottom. Toilets that can be reached by all children.	Restroom inside the house. Toilets and bathroom sink that can be reached by children, adolescents and the youth. Doors with an opening at the top. Non-slippery floors.

## Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Furniture adjusted to the needs of children, adolescents and the youth.	An adequate size bed per child. Enough space to place their clothes. Individual mattress and clean clothes for each child and adolescent. Adequate maintenance of furniture and infrastructure.	Adequate size wardrobes for children. Individual drawers for each. Adequate maintenance of furniture and infrastructure.
Safe access to new technologies.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Safe internet connection, content filtering systems, Wi-Fi that can be unplugged at night.
Access adapted for people with disabilities.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it. Compliance with the standards required by law.	All adaptability measures of the spaces are implemented (home access, adapted restrooms, internal areas, adapted furniture).

## Care Environments at SOS Children's Villages Communities

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Elements of physical safety implemented as established by the legislation of each country.	Compliance with the standards required by law.	Construction, electricity, water, sewages, protection measures against fire (evaluation routes, fire extinguishers, alarms...), security doors in risk areas and a first aid kit.
Safety construction.	All are needed.	Flat terrain, wooden or tile inclined, not very high roofs including easy access bars (at doors and/or windows). Adequate structure and furniture maintenance.





## Care Environments at SOS Children's Villages Communities



INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Adequate placement of care areas, social center and community home.	Placement within the community with play areas for children, adolescents and the youth.	Real integration with the community at a centric place known by the community. Own nature space at home or at the community center.
Adequate space distribution.	Common area and bathroom.	Common areas, private areas, bathroom inside the house or community center. Space for the technical team or for the families that organize the community center where confidential information is kept. One-story distribution, not on many.
Coverage of other specific safety measures for children, adolescents and the youth areas.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Covered wall plugs. Hand rails on stairs. Access walls to the house. Restricted access to cleaning products and kitchen appliances. Doors that can be opened from the inside. Windows with emergency exits and upper opening latch.
Bathrooms design adjusted to the needs of children, adolescents and the youth.	Bathroom inside care area, social center or community home. Doors with an opening at the top and bottom. Toilets can be reached by children.	Bathroom inside care area, social center or community home. Doors with an opening at the top and bottom. Toilets can be reached by children. Non-slippery floors, Adequate lightning.
Safe access to new technologies.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Safe internet connection, content filtering systems, Wi-Fi that can be unplugged at night.
Access adapted for people with disabilities.	A must. Compliance with the standards required by law.	All adaptability measures of the spaces are implemented (home access, adapted restrooms, internal areas, adapted furniture).



## 4.2. SECOND LEVEL: Protective and Safe Emotional Environment

### SOS Children's Villages Offices



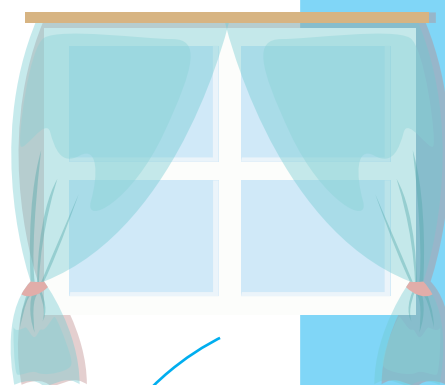
INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Warm and personalized decoration.	Each coworker can customize and give warmth to their individual environment.	Warm colors. Phrases of children, adolescents and the youth and of coworkers on the walls.  Nature elements. Whiteboard for coworkers to include the information they need and that they will use with the team (environments for level 4 participation).
Caring and integrated environments for gathering and for affective care.	Spaces where to eat. Coffee station.	Enough rest times for coworkers and suitable places to rest.  Places intended to listen to music or read a book.

### Care Alternatives or Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Space lightning guaranteed.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Natural light into the rooms and common areas. High ceilings and wide spaces.



## Care Alternatives or Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages



INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Warm and personalized decor by coworkers and by children, adolescents and the youth.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Warm colors on the walls. Phrases of children, adolescents and the youth and of coworkers on the walls. Without organizational images. Nature elements. Memories of children, adolescents and the youth who have lived at the home. Board for children, adolescents and the youth to write their messages (environments for level 4 participation). Corks in the rooms so that each child or adolescent can place their memories.
Ensure the physical warmth of the environment.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Colorful bedspreads bought with the participation of children, adolescents and the youth. Warm colored furniture and in good condition. Sufficient and warm bedding. Heating when it is cold and fans for the summer.
Availability of open environments.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Environments for movement. Wide doors and windows.
Music integration in their coexistence.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Music and coworkers' instructions for the different activities for children, adolescents and the youth without using rings or bells to indicate schedules. Environments to listen to music and dance. Possibility of listening to music with headphones at any time except at meals and during meetings.

## Care Alternatives or Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages



INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Creation or promotion of symbolic play environments.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Patio or leisure area with symbolic play (tires, ropes, fabrics...) building sets and climbing games. Games in good condition and with cheerful colors.  A corner to hide in the courtyard, a place where children, adolescents and the youth can stay alone when they want to without being bothered. Free time availability for different tasks, including leisure time, for children, adolescents and the youth to get organized without the need for predetermined schedules.
Respect for privacy.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Children, adolescents and the youth are allowed to remain alone in their rooms. Environments to save things individually.
Integration of the affective value of food into the home.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Permanent availability and free access to healthy food for children, adolescents and the youth at any time. Possibility to heat food at any time. Promote joint activities around food: cook together, design menus, prepare desserts. Turn eating environments into warm and quiet environments where they share in common, talk and not get punished.
Connection to nature.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Animals or pets care taking. Elements of nature both within the household and outside of it (plants, flowers, green environments).





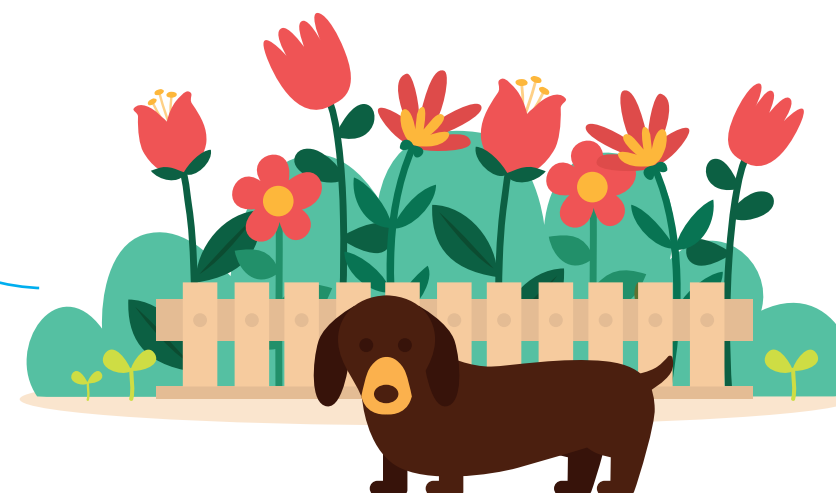
## Direct Care Environments at SOS Children's Villages Communities

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Guaranteed lightning of the social center and community home.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Natural light into the classrooms and common areas. High ceilings and wide spaces.
Promotion of warm and personalized decor by coworkers and by children, adolescents and the youth.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Warm colors on the walls. Phrases of children, adolescents and the youth and of coworkers on the walls. Without organizational images. Pictures and/or memories of their families and of children, adolescents and the youth who have lived at the community home or social center. Board or cork for the community (children, adolescents and the youth, families, coworkers) to write their messages (environments for level 4 participation).
Ensure the physical warmth of the environment.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Warm colored furniture and in good condition. Heating when it is cold and fans for the summer.
Availability of open areas that allow movement.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Wide environments that allow movement. Open doors and windows.
Music integration in their coexistence.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Music and coworkers' instructions for the different activities for children, adolescents and the youth without using



## Direct Care Environments at SOS Children's Villages Communities

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
		rings or bells to indicate schedules. Environments to listen to music and dance. Possibility of listening to music with headphones at any time except at meals, meetings or a course.
Creation or promotion of symbolic play environments.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Patio or leisure area with symbolic play (tires, ropes, fabrics...) building sets and climbing games.
Integration at the intervention of the affective value of food.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Inclusion of food in meetings, celebrations and programmatic actions developed at the house.
Connection to nature.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Animals or pets care taking. Elements of nature, green environments, plants in the social center or home community.



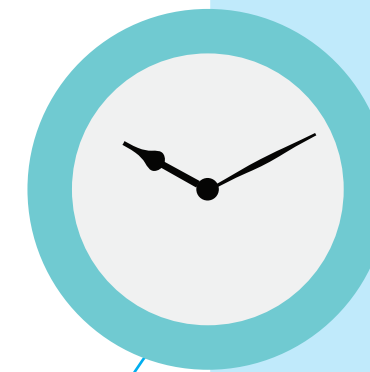
### 4.3. THIRD LEVEL: Conscious Adults as Guarantors of Protective and Safe Environments

#### SOS Children's Villages Offices

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Development of conscious affection as a professional competence <sup>8</sup> by management and coworkers.	Include the competence in the recruitment and selection processes of coworkers. Promotion and development of the competence in the performance evaluation processes.	Integration of the conscious affection competence as an essential competence to access a job at any level. Inclusion of conscious affection in the performance evaluation processes of any post in the organization. Assumption of conscious affection as an element of identity of the organization.
Positive parenting methodology development by management and coworkers, including positive discipline as a method of coping with conflict.	Promotion of positive parenting in the development and training processes for all coworkers of the organization. Implementation of the SOS Children's Villages Protection Policy.	Implementation of positive parenting in the programme area of the organization. Implementation of positive parenting in Human Resources core processes, such as: recruitment and selection, performance management and development and training.
Ingress and egress protocols development for teams' coworkers and offices, whatever the reason for their egress.	To comply with the standards referred to in the legislation of each country.	To implement an induction process for new coworkers that includes a field visit, participation in self-care environments and tutoring by Human Resources during a month.

8. Horno, P. (2017) *La afectividad consciente como competencia organizacional en Aldeas Infantiles SOS América Latina y el Caribe*. SOS Children's Villages Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

#### SOS Children's Villages Offices

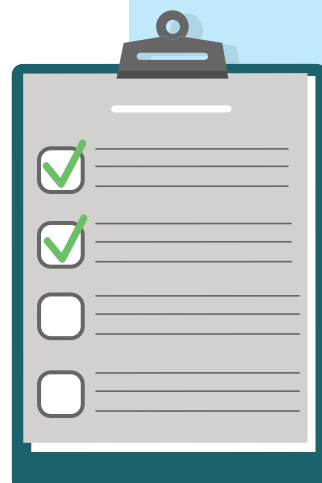


INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
		To implement appropriate closing processes: egress processes for children, adolescents and the youth in care alternatives; egress processes for the families of community care environments, egress processes of coworkers who leave the organization for whichever reason. All these processes must allow environments to work on the loss and farewell of those involved.
Frequent team self-care environments systematization.	Monthly meeting environment (breakfast, training gatherings, meetings for the exchange of ideas).	Weekly meeting environment within working hours (breakfast, training gatherings, meetings for the exchange of ideas).
Team consolidation leisure environments systematization within working hours.	Joint annual team activity out of the office.	Joint quarterly team activity out of the office during working hours.
Body work environments systematization.	Body work methodologies introduced into the planned self-care and training environments.	Weekly body work activity offered to the whole team during working hours.
Monitoring and therapeutic environments systematization.	Annual teams monitoring environment. Therapeutic resource availability for coworkers who request it.	Monthly team monitoring environments. Therapeutic resource availability for the coworkers who request it within working hours and covered by the organization.



## SOS Children's Villages Offices

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Development of protective labor policies (wages, hours, shifts, license... ).	To comply with the standards set by the laws of each country and organization.	Flexible schedules possibility depending on the task of each coworker. Possibility to work from home.  Possibility of maternal and paternal leave of up to one year.
Performance assessment processes development to offer guarantees to coworkers and include participatory methodologies.	To promote participatory evaluation processes including children, adolescents and the youth, and coworkers.	To implement an adequate performance evaluation system, that offers all guarantees to coworkers and considers evaluation methodologies 180 and 360 at all levels of the organization when necessary. To enable the annual evaluation of SOS Children's Villages programmes by children, adolescents and the youth and their families.
Effective implementation of the organizational protection policy.	This indicator does not establish a minimum because it is necessary to completely guarantee it.	Training for all coworkers on the protection policy and its implications, as well as on the theme of protection (types of mistreatment, preventive strategies, positive parenting, etc.).  Signing of the code of conduct by coworkers. Internal development of effective reporting mechanisms within the organization and at the national protection system, externally.



## Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

In the alternative care environment, it is necessary to use all the indicators developed for the environment of the offices for the direct care coworkers and technical teams and to also incorporate the following indicators:

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Development of a care and egress protocol for children, adolescents and the youth of the care alternative, whichever the egress reason.	To deploy the care protocol that includes the presentation of the rest of the children, adolescents and the youth and coworkers, as well as the explanation of the overall functioning of the home. To implement an intervention closure protocol that at least includes one farewell of the child or adolescent from the other children and coworkers who worked with him or her.	To implement a care protocol that, in addition to the presentation of the home and its residents, includes planning an integration phase of the child or adolescent in the home. In this phase, the technical team will assess the situation of the child or adolescent and a time of at least a month will be set to reach the adjustment of the child or adolescent to the dynamics of the home, letting them sleep as necessary and gradually incorporate to the tasks and dynamics of the home. To implement an intervention closure protocol, whether by family reintegration, transfer to another center or due to the egress into another care alternative that allows a symbolic grief process, the recognition of the team of what was received from the child and vice versa, a gradual transfer and the possibility of staying in touch if the child or adolescent expresses the need to do so.







## Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
		In addition, it includes the search for resources for independent living for those adolescents and the youth who meet the legal age and their family or community reintegration is not possible.
Development of specific trainings for direct care coworkers about conscious affection as an organizational competence, positive parenting, positive discipline and emotional shelter in crisis situations.	Implementation of a training on an annual basis for direct care coworkers and technical teams on positive parenting, positive discipline and emotional shelter in a crisis.	Implementation of a monthly monitoring environment for technical teams and direct care coworkers where the intervention that is developed in more complex cases can be reviewed. Inclusion of organizational performance assessment tools to measure the implementation of these topics in the day-to-day work of coworkers of the organization as a whole.
Inclusion of the affective dimension of the intervention within the educational project of the home or care alternative, specifying the activities necessary for care work with children, adolescents and the youth.	Development of quality therapeutic environments for children and adolescents. The therapeutic care of children, adolescents and the youth must include elements of the psychology of the link, systemic psychology, trauma psychology and third generation cognitive models. Likewise, it should take place in coordination with the other stakeholders of the system, especially education and health. Development of affective sex education and promotion of equality programmes.	Development of activities for the development of the history of life. Development of body work joint activities among children, adolescents and the youth, direct care coworkers and the technical team. Development of self-care environments for children, adolescents and the youth. Inclusion as part of the educational project of the implementation of emotional environment indicators in the care alternative.



## Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Promotion of formal to casual community protection mechanisms <sup>9</sup> .	Creation of a protection committee composed of key people in the community, not only of SOS Children's Villages coworkers.	Creation of a committee of individuals from the community with training on positive parenting and positive discipline that can accompany families and the community in the upbringing of children, adolescents and the youth with the necessary oversight and continued support of SOS Children's Villages. Creation, supervision and ongoing support to a network of adolescents and the youth who may assume a role as mediators in conflicts in the community among smaller children with the necessary oversight and continued support of SOS Children's Villages.
Promotion of protective affective networks in the community.	Development of informal leisure environments that strengthen relationships in the community: parties, celebrations, family days, etc.	Development of systematic self-care environments open to the community. Development of systematic body work activities open to the community. Promotion of groups within the community around leisure or development activities: groups of children, adolescents and the youth, women's groups, groups of families, etc.

9. Horno Goicoechea, P.; Losoviz Adaui, L.; Aguado Dívar, S.; Romeo Biedma, F.J. et al. (2015): *Comunidad Protectora: Estudio Regional sobre Mecanismos Comunitarios de Protección contra las violencias: Características y Desafíos*. Panamá: Plan Internacional para las Américas y Caribe.



Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Development of specific trainings for direct care coworkers on positive parenting, positive discipline and emotional shelter in crisis situations, as well as affective-sexual education and promotion of equality.	Implementation of a training on an annual basis for families and other key players of the community on positive parenting, positive discipline and emotional shelter in crisis, as well as affective-sexual education and promotion of equality.	Creation of a committee of individuals from the community with training on positive parenting and positive discipline that can accompany families and the community in the upbringing of children, adolescents and the youth with the necessary oversight and continued support of SOS Children's Villages. Creation of a network of adolescents and the youth who can assume a role as mediators in conflicts in the community among smaller children with the necessary oversight and continued support of SOS Children's Villages.

Community Care Environments at SOS Children's Villages

In this environment the indicators on the level of conscious adults are the same as those developed for the environment of the offices.



4.4. CUARTO NIVEL: Protagonismo de las personas que viven en el entorno, incluido el protagonismo de los niños, niñas, adolescentes y jóvenes

Oficinas de Aldeas Infantiles SOS

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Participation of children, adolescents and the youth and of coworkers from all levels of SOS Children's Villages in the internal processes of the organization.	Participation of children, adolescents and the youth and of coworkers from all levels of the organization in the planning and development processes of strategic the plans of SOS Children's Villages through significant consultative processes.	Systematic and significant consultative processes for SOS Children's Villages coworkers in programmatic decisions. Prominence of children, adolescents and the youth who are part of the programmes of SOS Children's Villages within the planning of the organization and the mechanisms for its performance evaluation.
Promotion of development plans of individual capabilities.	Annual participation of coworkers from all levels in the evaluation of their individual development plans.	Annual participation of coworkers from all levels in the design and evaluation of their individual development plans.
Performance evaluation processes for results that include participatory methodologies.	Participation of coworker in their own performance evaluation.	Implementation of 180 assessments for management positions. Implementation of 360 assessments for all SOS Children's Villages coworkers.
Participation of coworkers in the definition of roles and responsibilities and working conditions at the workplace.	Spaces for coworkers to suggest changes and improvements in their working conditions.	Joint definition of roles and responsibilities. Joint definition of a part of working conditions: schedules, work places and work conditions.





SOS Children's Villages Offices

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Development strategies and training for all coworkers on the participation of children, adolescents and young people.	Initial training on topics regarding children and young people participation as part of the induction process of coworkers. Annual basis training for all coworkers on the participation of children, adolescents and young people.	Introduction of recruitment, selection and performance assessment tools to measure the knowledge of coworkers on the participation of children, adolescents and young people and their deployment in everyday work. Introduction of the children, adolescent and young people participation component as a key focus of any programmatic planning and programme development. Supervision of the participation processes of children, adolescents and the youth within the organization to ensure their effectiveness and the guarantees to protect them.



Photo: @bradleymaxence

Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Prominent role of children, adolescents and the youth in the design and evaluation of care alternatives and care environments for young people of SOS Children's Villages.	<p>The children, adolescents and the youth participate in household tasks or coexistence environments according to their age and capacities.</p> <p>The children, adolescents and the youth can suggest activities to do at home or care environment.</p> <p>The children, adolescents and the youth are consulted on the decisions to be taken with respect to their life project.</p>	<p>Prominent role of children, adolescents and the youth in home or care environment routines planning and of the activities that are carried out within the protective regulations defined by direct care coworkers and technical teams.</p> <p>Prominent role of children, adolescents and the youth in decisions about their life project, accompanied by direct care coworkers and technical teams.</p>
Prominent role of children, adolescents and the youth who reside at care alternatives or environments in the community where they live.	<p>The children, adolescents and the youth can go to their friends' home within the community where they live.</p> <p>The birthdays of children, adolescents and the youth who live in the household are celebrated inviting home the people of the community they want to.</p> <p>The children, adolescents and the youth can invite friends from school, high school or the community to their home or care environment without schedules being established institutionally, but according to their interest.</p>	<p>Prominent role of children, adolescents and the youth in recreational activities, whether social or with a political impact in the community they live and at the educational center they go to, accompanied by direct care coworkers and technical teams when they are children and autonomously and in an organized fashion when they are young.</p> <p>The alternative of care works openly to the community: school age children attend alternative care activities, children can invite friends' home to have a snack or spend the afternoon and the birthdays of children,</p>





## Care Alternatives and Care Environments for the Youth of SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
		adolescents and the youth who live in the household are celebrated inviting home the people of the community they want to.
Prominent role of children, adolescents and the youth of the programme in the performance assessment processes of SOS Children's Villages.	Consultative processes to children, adolescents and the youth on an annual basis regarding the operation of the care alternative and care environments for the youth.	Prominent role of children, adolescents and the youth in performance assessment of direct care coworkers and technical teams.
Prominent role of direct care coworkers in the design and evaluation of care alternatives and care environments for young people of SOS Children's Villages.	Consultative processes to coworkers on an annual basis regarding the operation of the care alternative and care environments for the youth.	Prominent role of direct care coworkers in the design and improvement of SOS Children's Villages care alternatives.
Prominent role of direct care coworkers in the performance assessment processes of SOS Children's Villages.	Consultative processes to coworkers in the performance assessment process of the organization.	Prominent role of direct care coworkers in the performance evaluation of technical teams and management positions.

## Community Care Environments at SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Participation of children, adolescents and the youth in the generation of the emotional environment in the care environment, social center or community home.	Promotion of consultative processes to children, adolescents and the youth who participate in the home on the design of the emotional environment at home and the proposals of activities to be developed in the community care environment.	The children, adolescents and the youth participate well either individually or through the committees of children, adolescents and the youth in the decision-making on the social center and home community, its design and its activities.

## Community Care Environments at SOS Children's Villages

INDICATOR	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Participation of families in the generation of the emotional environment in the care environment, social center or community home.	Promotion of consultative processes to families participating in the community care environment on the design of community resources and proposals for activities to be developed in them.	Families participate well either individually or through the committees or groups of families already constituted in the decision-making for the creation of the emotional environment in the community.
Promotion of the participation of children, adolescents and young people in community mechanisms for formal to casual protection <sup>10</sup> .	Inclusion of representatives of adolescents and young people who live in the community on the formal and informal protection committees that are promoted.	Creation, supervision and ongoing support to a network of adolescents who may assume a role as mediators in conflicts in the community among smaller boys and girls with the necessary oversight and continued support of SOS Children's Villages.
Development of committees of children, adolescents and the youth in the community.	Promotion of informal groups of children, adolescents and the youth through joint activities.	Creation and development of formally constituted committees of children, adolescents and the youth.
Participation of children, adolescents and the youth in the generation of the emotional environment in the community.	Promotion of consultative processes to children, adolescents and the youth in the community on the design of community resources and proposals for activities to be developed in them.	The children, adolescents and the youth participate well either individually or through the committees of children, adolescents and the youth in the decision-making on the creation of the emotional environment in the community.

10. Horno Goicoechea, P.; Losoviz Adauí, L.; Aguado Dívar, S.; Romeo Biedma, F.J. et al. (2015): *Comunidad Protectora: Estudio Regional sobre Mecanismos Comunitarios de Protección contra las violencias: Características y Desafíos*. Panamá: Plan Internacional para las Américas y Caribe.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Generating a safe and caring environment is an essential condition to ensure the right of children and adolescents to their protection and full development. Working from a focus on the rights of the child implies ensuring protective and safe environments for development. It is, therefore, an institutional obligation to all organizations and institutions working with children, adolescents and the youth and their families.

But generating these protective and safe environments involves a **consciousness process** that must occur in all levels of the organization, not only at the level of direct care coworkers. Only to the extent that the different levels of an organization, beginning with its leadership and management, create protective and safe environments in each office or environment where the organization works, coworkers of each area may in turn generate those protective and safe environments in care alternatives, care environments for young people and community care environments.

Ensuring protective and safe environments is the first condition to attain full implementation of the rights of the child, adolescents and the youth

Therefore, protective and safe environments must be an **organizational condition**, not limited to direct care coworkers, or the protection programme area. And generating those protective and safe environments must be an institutional commitment. That commitment should be integrated into the core processes of Human Resources at the organization: staff recruitment and selection, performance management and training and development.

This guide suggests various **indicators needed to move forward in that organizational consciousness process**. It is not intended to be a closed list of indicators, it must be open and under constant review, but it is a starting point that allows SOS Children's Villages and any organization and institution that works with children, adolescents and the youth and their families to assess to what extent the environments where it works are protective and safe environments.

It is very useful to structure the **consciousness process based on the four levels of protective and safe environments**: the physical environment, the emotional environment, the team of conscious adults and the prominence of the people living in the environment, including children, adolescents and the youth. On many occasions, the environments may be physically safe and protective but not emotionally: they can be environments where physical conditions are adequate, but they are cold and with little customization. It is also possible to have teams that are formed and prepared to intervene appropriately that do not attend the care of the emotional environment or the prominent processes of children, adolescents and the youth in an appropriate manner. The intervention is largely built around these two levels of action: the emotional environment and the prominence of children, adolescents and the youth. The levels of physical environment and conscious adults will be conditions or requirements to develop this work with children, adolescents and the youth.

Ensuring protective and safe environments is the first condition to attain **full implementation of the rights of the child, adolescents and the youth**. But also, and not less important, is a condition for the **care of teams** and the guarantee that they can perform **quality work**. This guide is intended to be a tool for a necessary organizational process that gives sense, structure and coherence to the different levels of intervention of SOS Children's Villages.

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