



"He is so little on tv why is he so big and scary in real life?"

Written by Carol Crooks aka CLarol the CLown. 2011

When I was little, my favourite show was the Bozo Show. Fortunately there was a local Bozo in my home town where they also produced the local Bozo television show. My mom, bless her soul, took my older sister and brother and I down to be audience members at a live taping of the show. Upon our arrival the studio manager stopped my mother and said, "We're sorry Madam we don't allow children under the age of five in our audience." He pointed at me. I was the youngest of the family at the time and was three years old. My mom tried to explain, "But she is the one who loves Bozo. She is the reason why we came. She watches the show every day" The manager explained, "Bozo on tv is only 3 inches tall, but in real life he is much much bigger. He was actually over six feet tall. "When children under 5 years old see him in person it can be frightening and we can't have children crying in the audience and once you are in the studio you cannot leave." My mom and I sat out in the hall as my older brother and sister sat in the studio watching my hero Bozo.

The studio manager knew what doctor's Herschkowitz and Krogseng (see BLog Are you going to eat me? A real question posed to CLarol that you may need to answer.) knew first hand. Costumed characters can scare a toddler. Your child might coo and smile with Santa when they are one year, and the next year they might scream blue murder at the mere sight of the Bearded Red Guy. It all depends on how old they are.

So when you read a party planning book that says clowns are appropriate for a one to three year old children's party don't believe them. As a matter of fact burn the book, don't read any further, they are lying to you. Don't believe them, based on the evidence sited by Dr. Herschkowitz and Krogseng's research and book. Don't believe them based on my many years of experience of performing for young children.

As a children's entertainer who earned her living at thousands of birthday parties, you would think I would want to attend each and every birthday party I possibly could just to help pay off my mortgage. In reality I have talked myself out of financial stability on more than one occasion just to see that children aged 1-3 receive an age appropriate party WITHOUT a costumed character. My husband was never happy about this.

On the flip side I also know that as a costumed character who knows how to properly handle a scared child can create an extremely positive party for your child even if they have the death grip on you. Just keep in mind, that same performer could come back the very next day and your child could be totally sympatico with them being around. It is all a matter of where your child is at this stage of physical and psychological development.

So a word of warning;

Don't let your child watch Stephen King's IT – that is just bad parenting. Imagine the therapy bills you'll have to pay for later in life for your child's phobia of birthday's and birthday parties. Not to mention the flack I'll have to deal with when they see me in the Mall when their 16 and with their mob of friends. You think they scream loud now. OY vey! Don't say I didn't warn you.

Don't roll your child up to Mickey Mouse or a clown in a stroller. Your kid will think you are trying to feed him to the giant smiling rodent on a wheeled platter. Stop, crouch down beside your child and talk calmly about the clown or Mickey by saying "Look at those silly shoes, oh my what funny clothes." They walk away and come back another day. I'm just telling you what I know.

Want to read more about how a year or two can make a BIG difference in how your child reacts to a clown? Read CLarol BLog [Connor's third and fifth birthday parties.](#)

