

Swim and Water Safety News – Parent and Child Aquatics Participants

Parent’s Corner

You play an important role in Red Cross Parent and Child Aquatics. Your enthusiasm and guidance can make your child’s early aquatic experience fun and rewarding. Even when you’re not in the water, you play an essential role in the Parent and Child Aquatics.

How can you help?

- Supervise your child at all times.
- Get wet and enjoy the program with your child.
- Be ready to try new skills with your child.
- Help your child develop a healthy respect for water while having fun.
- Do not use bulky diapers. Swim diapers or pool pants designed especially for swimming are recommended if child not potty-trained.
- Bring an extra towel to put on your child after getting out of the water to warm them up quickly.
- Try to avoid scheduling swim lessons close to meal or nap times.

How can you build on your child’s swimming experience?

- Encourage your child to continue exploring water during bath time.
- Take your child to public or family swims to increase his/her comfort level and confidence in the water.
- Be encouraging to boost your child’s confidence as you move from being in the water with them to watching your child take lessons independently.
- Understand that children develop swimming skills at different rates.

Be a Water Smart Family!

Practice basic water safety!

Teach your children to always ask for—and receive—your permission before entering any body of water.

Life jackets are important!

They are not a substitute for close supervision. Young children and anyone who cannot swim well should wear a life jacket whenever they are in, on or around the water.

Understand the limitation of water toys.

Inflatables, such as water wings, and swim rings and other flotation devices, are not substitutes for U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets.

Practice sun safety!

Have children wear protective clothing, such as a light-weight long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, whenever they are exposed to UV rays.

Follow the “PLEAs” that promote safe and healthy swimming:

Please don’t swim when you have diarrhea. Please don’t swallow the pool water. Please practice good hygiene.

Be safe at the beach and the waterpark!

Whether it is a community pool, lakefront beach or a waterpark, only allow children to swim in clean, supervised and designated aquatic environments.

Swim and Water Safety News – Pre-School Aquatics Participants

Parent Corner

Even though you're not in the water, you play an essential role in Red Cross Preschool Aquatics. Your enthusiasm and guidance can make your child's swim lessons a fun and rewarding experience. Talk to the instructor about strategies to help your child transition from Parent and Child Aquatics to an instructor-led class where mom or dad is an observer, rather than an in-water participant.

How can you help?

- Encourage your child to use the bathroom before swim lessons.
- Bring a light snack and drink for your child. Kids are often hungry and tired after a lesson.
- Review water safety tips for your home.

How can you build on your child's swimming experience?

- Understand that children develop swimming skills at different rates. The physical abilities of children vary greatly, leading to development at different rates. Most children will not achieve all of the skills in one session of lessons.
- Take your child to public or family swims to increase his/her comfort level and confidence in the water.
- Be a healthy role model! Go with your child to family swims and make swimming part of your active lifestyle.
- Support your child by praising his or her effort in the pool.
- Talk with the instructor to find out if your child is experiencing trouble with certain skills. The instructor may suggest skills to work on during a family swim.

Be a Water Smart Family!

Practice basic water safety!

Teach your children to always ask for—and receive—your permission before entering any body of water.

Know how to recognize an emergency.

A person who is face down and has not moved or is on the bottom of the pool and not moving is in trouble and needs help. Tell the lifeguard or a grown up right away.

Too much sun is no fun!

Put on a lot of sunscreen before you go outside. Put it on again every 2 hours and put it on again after you go swimming or if you are sweating.

Know how to call for help.

When you recognize an emergency, stay calm and call or have someone else call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number. Every second counts.

Don't just pack it, wear your jacket!

A life jacket helps you stay afloat if you fall into the water.

Stay safe around aquatic environments.

Every swimming area has rules; be sure to follow all the rules. If you do not know the rules, ask your parents or the lifeguards to explain them to you.

Reach or throw, don't go!

If no adult or lifeguard is present or capable to help and the victim is close enough, without going into the water yourself, use a reaching assist to help him or her out of the water.

Look before you leap!

If you cannot see the bottom and you are not sure what is under the water, do not jump or dive in.

Think so you don't sink!

If you get tired and cannot make it to safety, do not panic. Instead, think about what you can do.

Swim and Water Safety News – Learn-to-Swim Participants

(Levels 1-4)

Parent's Corner

It is common for children to participate in several sessions of the same level before they successfully demonstrate each skill. That is okay! It is not important how quickly they move through a level, but that they acquire each skill. Your commitment to ensuring that your child learns lifelong swimming and water safety skills is evident. Your continued interest and enthusiasm can make your child's swim lessons a positive and rewarding experience.

How can you help?

- Bring a light healthy snack and drink for your child. Kids are often hungry and tired after a lesson. It's important to replace fluids and energy.
- Ask the instructor which skills your child should practice, and then make practicing fun at home or your local pool!
- Support your child by praising his or her effort in the pool.
- Understand that children develop swimming skills at different rates. Remember, many children need to repeat a level multiple times to complete all of the skills.

How can you build on your child's swimming experience?

- Talk about what your child has learned in the lesson to develop safe practices for the home and other aquatic environments such as lakes, rivers and waterparks.
- Encourage your child, when at play, to try the skills he or she is learning in lessons.
- Take your child to public or family swims to give your child plenty of opportunity to develop strength, practice skills and increase his/her comfort level in the water.
- Stay interested in your child's progress. Ask your child to show you a skill learned in swim lessons and incorporate the skill into a game to play in the pool.
- Think about safe locations for diving. Think "safety first" by entering "feet first, the first time" to ensure there are no water hazards. Always dive in water where it is 9ft. deep or more.

Be a Water Smart Family!

Know how to recognize an emergency. Sometimes a person who is in trouble cannot call for help, that is why you should tell the lifeguard or a grown up right away if you think someone is in trouble.

Stay safe around aquatic environments. Pool decks are for walking only, no running or other horseplay. They are very slippery and you could fall.

Don't just pack it, wear your jacket! Whenever you go boating, wear a life jacket. Put on your life jacket before going out on the dock and do not take it off until you return.

Know how to call for help. If a lifeguard or a grown up is not nearby, use a phone and call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number. Tell the person who answers the phone what happened. Do not hang up. The person who answers the phone might be able to tell you how you can help.

Know who the lifeguards are. Only swim in areas where the lifeguard can see you. If you can see the lifeguard, then the lifeguard can see you.

Reach or throw, don't go! If any object is available, use it to extend your reach, such as a foam noodle, kick board, shirt, belt, stick or towel. Swim with a buddy in a supervised area. No matter how old you are or how strong of a swimmer you are, always swim with a buddy in a supervised area.

Think twice before going near cold water or ice! Anyone who falls into cold water should try to swim to safety if it is possible to do so with only a few strokes.

Too much sun is no fun! UV rays are invisible, so you need to take steps to protect your skin whenever you go outside in the sun.

Look before you leap! Check with a lifeguard to see if it is okay to jump in the water. If it is allowed, make sure that you can see what is in front of you before you enter the water.

Wave, tide or ride – follow the guide. Follow posted directions and instructions from the lifeguards to get into the correct position before starting down a water slide—face up and feet-first in most cases. On speed slides, crossing the legs helps prevent injuries.

Swim and Water Safety News – Learn-to-Swim Participants

(Levels 5-6)

Don't Forget!

- Remember that not completing a level the first time, or even the second time, just means there are important skills you need to continue to improve upon and strengthen.
- Bring a healthy snack and drink for after the lesson to replace fluids and energy.

How can you build on your own swimming experience?

- Practice your strokes even when you are not in the water. This can help you work on the proper leg and arm movements and commit them to memory.
- Level 6 builds on endurance and proficiency of all six swimming strokes. Whenever possible, practice continuous swims, using different strokes and turns along the way.
- Knowing how to tread water and survival float are important skills to strengthen and practice outside of lessons. You never know when you might need to rely on these skills.

Where do you go after taking a Level 6 course?

Swimmers who take a Level 6 course are often preparing for more advanced courses, such as Water Safety Instructor or Lifeguarding. Some participants are preparing to participate in other aquatic activities, such as competitive swimming or diving. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter to learn about these opportunities. Some participants move on to specialized activities, such as joining competitive swimming or diving teams. Ask about the continuing aquatic activities offered.

Level 6 courses in Learn-to-Swim are customized to meet the objectives of the participants. For instance, this option can help those who want to achieve a higher level of fitness. Because of the variety this level offers, you can repeat it to focus on different goals and activities each time.

Things to keep in mind after completing Level 6:

- Your enthusiasm and interest in learning to swim makes you a great candidate for teaching swimming and water safety to others.
- Diving should only be practiced in areas that are specifically designated for diving.

Be Water Smart!

Reach or throw, don't go! Community pools, recreational areas and many hotel and motel pools have reaching equipment, such as a reaching pole or shepherd's crook, near the water.

Think so you don't sink! If you get caught in a rip current it is important to remember to think so you don't sink. For many people, waves are part of what makes swimming at an ocean beach fun. Even at designated beaches, waves can be dangerous. Rip currents often form narrow strips of choppy water that moves differently than the water on the other sides of it. Rip currents move very fast, and if you get caught in one, they can take you away from shore.

Think twice before going near cold water or ice! Floating in place until help arrives is the best way to survive a cold-water emergency in open water or when a great distance from the shore. Cold water is dangerous, even if you do not intend to go in. Whenever you are in, on or around cold water, wear a lifejacket.

It is important to know first aid and CPR/AED.

The American Red Cross recommends that at least one person in every household be trained in lifesaving first aid and CPR/AED skills.

Look before you leap! No other swimmers should be in the diving area when the diving board or tower is in use. Always dive in water 9ft deep or more.

Swim with a buddy in a supervised area.

Do not swim at unguarded ocean beaches or in areas not designated for swimming. Take great care around currents, which are often unpredictable and fast moving.

Learn about boating before you go floating!

Pay attention to weather forecasts and understand local water conditions and hazards.

Wave, tide or ride, - follow the guide.

The water at the bottom of a slide can be deep and have a current as well. You have to know what to expect before you get in the water.