



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Water Safety Tips

Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children ages 5 to 14, with children from communities of color at greatest risk. With National Water Safety Month in May and summer around the corner, now is a great time for parents to remember the importance equipping children with essential water safety skills. The Y offers swim lessons that help reduce the risk of childhood drowning, develop a lifelong love for swimming and provide children from underserved communities greater access to water safety programs.

Before letting your children hit the water this summer, remember these few tips to ensure it's an enjoyable and safe experience.

- 1. Never swim alone.** Teach your children that they should only swim in locations where a lifeguard is on duty.
- 2. Supervise your children whenever they're in water.** Whether it's bath time or taking a dip in a pool or lake, make sure your children are within arm's reach at all times.
- 3. Don't engage in breath holding activities.** Children shouldn't hold their breath for a prolonged amount of time while swimming, as this can cause drowning and has several other severe physical side-effects.
- 4. Wear a Life Jacket:** Inexperienced or non-swimmers should wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- 5. Don't jump in the water to save a friend who is struggling in deep water.** If a child finds their friend in deep water unexpectedly, their natural reaction may be to jump in the water to try to save them. Even if a child is a great swimmer, a panicked person will overpower them, pulling them underwater with them. The Y's Safety Around Water program teaches the "reach, throw, don't go" concept of using a long object to reach for them and pull them to safety. By using this technique children can help their friend without compromising their own safety.
- 6. Enroll your children in water safety or swim lessons.** Just like teaching your children to look both ways before they cross the street, participating in formal water safety lessons teaches them an important life skill. The Y's swim lessons teaches children fundamental water safety skills and what to do if they find themselves in water unexpectedly.

Learning how to swim also has multiple benefits beyond the ability to enjoy water safely. It helps children strive for physical achievement, promotes healthy living and builds their confidence.