



YWCA of Brunswick Aquatics Director Linda Randall talks to a class of young swimmers about water safety.

Summer Water Safety Tips for Parents

Despite a 40 percent decline since 1987, drowning is still the second leading cause of unintentional, injury-related death for children ages one to 14, taking more than 900 children's lives each year, *Safe Kids USA* states.

"The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in, on and around the water is to learn to swim and swim well," says The American Red Cross.

In the past, the American Academy of Pediatrics said swim classes might give parents and toddlers a false sense of security, but, recently, the group changed its stance. Now, the group said it is fine to enroll children as young as one because toddlers might be less likely to drown if they have had swim lessons.

Parents should select the classes that focus on water safety and require a child to be in the water with their child, said Connie Harvey, who heads Aquatic Development for the Red Cross.

Linda Randall, Aquatics Director for the YWCA of Brunswick, commented, "Each year I am asked by parents about 'drown-proofing' their children. The only method of 'drown-proofing' that I can recommend is parental preparation and supervision. There is no substitute for supervision."

The following recommendations come from Safe Kids USA, American Red Cross and Randall's own experience.

- Maintain constant supervision around any water (pools, rivers, lakes, bathtubs, toilets and even buckets of water), no matter how well your children can swim, no matter how shallow the water.
- Stay within arm's reach of an inexperienced swimmer while in the water and do not rely on substitutes (floats, rafts, etc.)
- Learn to swim and swim well.
- Learn CPR and always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it.
- Always wear proper lifejackets when boating and know how to float with them.
- Restrict a child's access to water when not supervised.
 1. Empty tubs, buckets, inflatable pools, etc., when not in use.
 2. Be sure that fences, doors and barriers are secure and reliable.
 3. Childproof toilets.