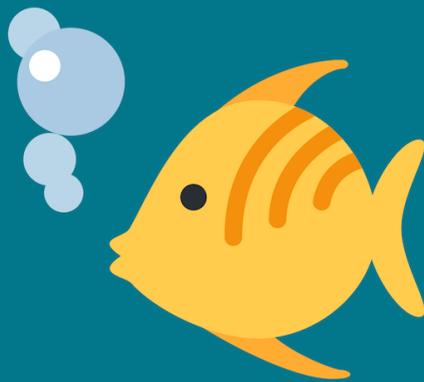


Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association, Inc.

# Water Safety Handbook



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## Introduction

Thank you for choosing to host a local event in order to bring this important message of water safety to children and parents within your community. Your local event helps us to achieve our aim of preventing water-related injuries and fatalities.

The Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association, Inc. (CRPA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Our mission is to support the recreation and park profession and steward the future of public parks and recreational opportunities in Connecticut in order to promote active lifestyles, livable communities, and quality of life for all who call Connecticut home. For over 70 years, it has been a central part of our mission to ensure that children and families have the greatest opportunity to safely participate in physical activity such as swimming and water sports. Members of CRPA are a leading provider of swim lessons to individuals of all ages across the state. **Learning how to swim is an essential component to preventing water related fatalities. This local event serves as a starting point for children to learn how to be safe around water.**

CRPA created this event guide based on the American Red Cross' "Longfellow's WHALE Tales Resources" and curriculum from Dr. Jennifer Masone's "Water Safety Curriculum for Camps". It is recommended that the individuals organizing and instructing at your water safety event are knowledgeable in the aquatics field and have either a LG, LGI, LGIT, or WSI certification, or an equivalent certification.

Inside this handbook, along with the Water Safety Workbook, you will find an event overview, outline and setup guide, printable resources to be used at learning stations, and additional information that will help you make the most of your water safety event.

## Purpose

The CRPA Water Safety Handbook and Workbook were compiled to provide a universal water safety curriculum that can be presented to the residents of Connecticut through camps and Parks & Recreation Departments as a guideline for learning about water safety. The information presented in the handbook and workbook is meant for public educational purposes only.

## Liability

CRPA assumes no liability for injuries incurred at each individual event and is not liable for incorrect or out-of-date information shared with the public at a local event or as a result of this handbook or workbook.

# Event Overview

Thank you for choosing to host a water safety event at your facility! CRPA believes that water safety is imperative to the safety of all children and is committed to preventing water-related injuries and fatalities. Hosting a water safety event at your facility, is a starting point to provide residents with the skills to make safe choices, increase physical fitness, prevent injuries, and act in emergency and rescue situations.

## Facility Requirements

- Space to accommodate 5 learning stations, each of which are outlined in this handbook
- Space for 1 large group activity

**Recommended Timeframe:** 60 - 80 minutes, not including setup or cleanup

- 10 - 15 minutes: introduction and passport distribution
- 40 - 50 minutes: 5 rotating learning stations (7-10 mins each) - participants are split into smaller groups
- 10 - 15 minutes: 1 large group activity (read book and sign safe swimmer pledge)

## Supplies

- The majority of supplies needed for this event are included in the accompanying Water Safety Workbook including activity printouts and worksheets for each learning station
- A complete list of supplies needed for each learning station is outlined in this handbook under each station's specific section

## Other Important Factors

While this handbook and event is geared towards educating children between the ages of 3 and 10, it is recommended to also have information available for parents. Please consider supplying a parent information station at your event. The American Red Cross website provides a large amount of information on drowning prevention, home pool safety, water safety in the home, and watching children around the water. Information is available on their website: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety.html> in both English and Spanish.

## Questions?

Should you have questions regarding the content of the handbook or workbook, event procedure, or anything else related to your water safety event, please do not hesitate to contact:

### CRPA Office:

860-721-0384 or [info@crpa.com](mailto:info@crpa.com)  
[www.crpa.com](http://www.crpa.com)

### CRPA Aquatics Co-Chairs:

Bailey Dailey  
*Recreation Supervisor, Winding Trails, Inc*  
860-677-8458 x 11

Courtney Hewett  
*Director, Plainville Parks & Recreation*  
860-747-6022

# Event Outline & Setup: *Quick Reference Guide*

Below is a brief outline of supplies, activities, and station learning outcomes for your water safety event. A more in-depth description of the stations is included in each station's specific section following the outline.

## 1. Introduction & Passports (10 - 15 minutes)

### a. Supplies Needed:

- Timer
- Whistle
- Passports
- Stamp or stickers
- Pens, markers, crayons
- Parent safety tip handouts (recommended at registration table)

### b. Introduction

- Discuss general water safety for all bodies of water
- Discuss the importance of a lifeguard's whistle (will be using to signal station changes)

### c. Passport (refer to Water Safety Workbook page 4 for printout)

- Hand out a passport to each child
- Explain that they will have it "stamped" (use stamps or stickers) at each learning station
- Once learning stations are completed, passports will be "reviewed" so they can sign the Safe Swimming Pledge at the end of the event

## 2. Rotating Station Activities (40 - 50 minutes): participants are split into five smaller groups and will rotate through each of the 5 learning stations spending 7 - 10 minutes at each station

### a. Station 1: Lifeguards & Supervised Swimming Areas

#### I. Supplies Needed (refer to Water Safety Workbook pages 5 -15 for printouts)

- Printed pictures of lifeguard supplies (laminated if possible)
- "What is a Supervised Swimming Area?" Worksheet
- Consider having physical equipment available for use in the activity if possible
- Additional activity sheets in case of extra time

#### II. Learning Outcomes: after completing this lesson, students will be able to...

- Define a safe swimming area
- Understand what a lifeguard does (responsibilities/duties)
- Identify some safety equipment
- If extra time: explain how to help a lifeguard in an emergency situation

#### III. Activity Options:

- Outfit a Lifeguard
- "What is a Supervised Swimming Area?" Worksheet

### b. Station 2: Be Cool, Follow the Rules

#### I. Supplies Needed (refer to Water Safety Workbook pages 16 - 21 for printouts)

- "Safety Rules" Poster
- "Safe or Not Safe?", "Pool Rules", and "Pool Patrol" Worksheets
- Enlarged rules for your town or organization's facilities
- Crayons and pencils
- Additional activity sheets in case of extra time

#### II. Learning Outcomes: after completing this lesson, students will be able to...

- Identify rules for safe participation in water activities at pools, waterparks, oceans, lakes and rivers
- Explain how following safety rules can prevent accidents
- Describe a safe swimming area
- Show an understanding of local pool and waterfront rules

#### III. Activity Options

- "Safe or Not Safe?", "Pool Rules", and "Pool Patrol" Worksheets
- Lifeguard May I?

c. **Station 3: Look Before You Leap**

- I. Supplies Needed (refer to Water Safety Workbook pages 22 - 34 for printouts)
  - “Look Before You Leap” poster
  - “Check it Out” Worksheet & Partner Puzzle
  - Multiple puzzles (laminated if possible)
  - Crayons and pencils
  - Printout of safety equipment and their definitions
  - Consider having actual safety equipment onsite for children to view (ring buoy, rescue tube, etc.)
  - Additional activity sheets in case of extra time
- II. Learning Outcomes: after completing this lesson, students will be able to...
  - Recognize a safe place for swimming
  - Identify the safety equipment that should be at a safe swimming site
  - Explain how to check the water to see if it is safe for swimming
- III. Activity Options
  - “Check it Out” worksheet
  - Puzzles
  - Rip Current Relay

d. **Station 4: Reach or Throw, Don’t Go**

- I. Supplies Needed (refer to Water Safety Workbook pages 36 - 37 for printouts)
  - “Reach or Throw, Don’t Go” poster
  - “What is a Buddy?” worksheet
  - Cones
  - Ring buoy and/or throw line
  - Reaching assist items (ex: fishing pole, rake, boat oar, baseball bat, etc.)
  - Additional activity sheets in case of extra time
- II. Learning Outcomes: after completing this lesson, students will be able to...
  - Recognize the signs that someone is having trouble in the water
  - Explain how to safely help someone who is drowning or needs help in the water
  - Identify objects that would work for reaching and throwing assists
  - Explain why only a lifeguard should go into the water to rescue someone.
  - Demonstrate how to properly throw a floating object to someone who is drowning or needs help in the water.
- III. Activity Options
  - Reaching Assists
  - Throwing Assists
  - Throw Me a Line

e. **Station 5: Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard’s Chair**

- I. Supplies Needed (refer to Water Safety Workbook pages 38 - 40 for printouts)
  - Obstacle course materials
  - “What is a Buddy Worksheet”
  - Additional activity sheets in case of extra time
- II. Learning Outcomes: after completing this lesson, students will be able to...
  - Recognize the potential dangers of swimming alone
  - Explain the importance of swimming in supervised (lifeguarded) areas only
  - Explain what a buddy is
  - Understand what it means to “swim as a pair”
- III. Activity Options:
  - Partner races & “What is a Buddy?” worksheet
  - Swim With a Buddy

3. **Closing Activity** (5 - 10 minutes)

- a. Read book: Stewie the Duck Learns to Swim
- c. Have participants turn in Passports and sign the “Safe Swimmer Pledge” (refer to Water Safety Workbook page 41 for printout)

4. **Activity Modifications:** refer to the end of each specific station section for optional modifications to each activity

# Event Promotions & Media Relations

Hosting a water safety event will provide an opportunity to promote your facility and programs. Your local media and social media networks can be powerful partners and tools in boosting awareness of your department, facility, and event. With a few key steps, you may get your message out through radio, TV, daily newspapers and community or specialized publications, as well as social media channels.

Members of CRPA are a leading provider of swim lessons to individuals of all ages across the state. Learning how to swim is an essential component to preventing water related fatalities. This local event is not only as a starting point for children to learn how to be safe around water, but is also a great way to promote your own learn-to-swim programs to children and adults in your town. Make sure to have information available at registration and throughout the event on your swim lessons, LGT & WSI courses, CPR & First Aid classes, and any other pertinent programming that you provide.

**Prepare your materials:** Key messages, news release and/or media advisory, community newsletter article and social media calendar.

**Send out a press release and/or social media** advisory a week in advance of your event. **A sample press release can be found on the following page (pg 8).** Be sure to cover local radio, newspaper, and television stations. When dealing with television, tell them the “visuals” you will have at your event. If you are using social media to promote your event, mention in your news release that you will be publishing social media posts leading up to, during, and after the event.

**Event listings:** Send your event information from your media advisory to all event listings in your community. Don't forget to register your event with online event listings as well. Distribute event flyers to your swimming classes as a cross promotion.

**Submit a feature article to your community newsletter:** This can be done leading up to your event or after it is complete. If you aren't hosting a water safety event, you can still submit an article on the importance of water safety in the summer to your community newsletter.

**Boost your promotion:** Having a physical attraction for the public to view will increase the draw to your event, and may also attract additional media attention. Fire and police departments have a community education division. Approach your local department(s) to have a rescue vehicle or safety equipment on view at your event location. Consider having an elected official welcome participants to the event or read the water safety book at the end of the event. Additionally, consider presenting an award to someone who has contributed to community water safety, (performed a rescue; provided safety education; installed a safety device, etc.).

# Sample Press Release

[Insert your letterhead/logo]

**Contact:**

[Your Department's PR Contact]

[Your Department's Phone #]

**For Immediate Release**

[Date]

## Promoting Recreational Water Safety as Part of Water Safety Awareness Month

[City, State] – According to the CDC, drowning is the number-one cause of accidental death in children under the age of four. “Whether it’s in a tub, tidal waters, or a pool, water of any depth can be dangerous for kids,” says [name], [title] with [town department/org name]. “By taking the proper precautions, such as enrolling your children in swim lessons or teaching them to be safe around all types of water, accidental drowning can be prevented. This is critical information that all caretakers of young children should know and understand.”

[Name of town department/org] has partnered with the Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association, Inc. in their statewide campaign to create greater awareness of water safety and protect children from accidental drowning. This water safety campaign is aimed primarily at Connecticut residents and designed to help prevent water-related fatalities and injuries throughout the state.

Important safety tips include:

- Swim lessons are a great step toward drowning prevention
- Always be in arm’s distance from your child
- Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards
- Do not swim alone; always use the buddy system
- Choose lifejackets over water wings
- Actively supervise children and non-swimmers around the water, even when lifeguards are present
- Stay off electronic devices; avoid distracting activities such as checking email or social media

For more information about water safety, drowning statistics, and prevention visit <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/water-safety/index.html>.

###

# Activity Feedback Survey

A number of the activities provided in the following learning station sections were provided to CRPA by **Dr. Jennifer Masone**, an individual who has thirty years of experience working with children. Her interest in aquatics includes experience as an age group swimmer, lifeguard, collegiate diver, aquatics supervisor, open water swimmer, and triathlete. She has a doctorate in Educational Leadership and serves as an elementary school principal where she observes physical education classes from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. She serves as the Co-Chair of the Connecticut Legislative Task Force on Water Safety Awareness. She has a keen interest in saving children's lives and changing the way society approaches educating children on water safety awareness.

Your feedback on these games is welcome. Please email the CRPA office at [info@crpa.com](mailto:info@crpa.com) with any comments and suggestions that CRPA can pass on to Dr. Masone.

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## FEEDBACK FORM

Your feedback on the water safety awareness games would be much appreciated.

What age group played the games:

- 5 and under       6-10       10-15

Which games did you play?

- Swim with a Buddy     Lifeguard May I?     Musical Life Jackets     Throw Me a Line     Rip Current Relay

Did the children know the water safety principles before they played the game?

- Yes       No

Did the children know the water safety principles after they played the game?

- Yes       No

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

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# LIFEGUARDS & SUPERVISED SWIMMING AREAS



# Station 1: Lifeguards & Supervised Swimming Areas

**Supplies:** Refer to **Water Safety Workbook pages 5 - 15** for printouts

- Printed pictures of lifeguard supplies (laminated if possible)
- Consider having physical equipment available for use in the activity if possible
- Additional activity sheets in case of extra time (**Water Safety Workbook pages 42 - 52 for printouts**)

**Learning Outcomes:** After completing this lesson, students will be able to...

- Define a safe swimming area
- Understand what a lifeguard does (responsibilities/duties)
- Identify some safety equipment
- If extra time: explain how to help a lifeguard in an emergency situation

**Ask the group:**

- **What is a lifeguard?**

**After a few answers from the group provide this answer:**

- A lifeguard is a trained person who is responsible for keeping people at swimming pools, beaches, lakes and waterparks safe
- Lifeguards do this by helping to prevent and responding to emergencies

- **What are lifeguard's responsibilities?**

- A lifeguard's main responsibility is to prevent drowning and other injuries from occurring at an aquatic facility (an aquatic facility is a place where recreational water activities happen)
- Ask the group what they think a few of the responsibilities are
- **After a few answers from the group provide some from this list:**
  1. Keeping a close watch of the activities in the water
  2. Preventing injuries by watching for dangerous situations or behaviors and stopping them
  3. Enforcing facility rules and teaching people about them
  4. Recognizing and responding quickly to all emergencies
  5. Giving first aid and CPR
  6. Working as a team with other lifeguards, staff, and management

**Ask the group:**

- **What does "supervised" mean?**

**Answer:** Being watched by someone who ensures that you are safe

- **Who should supervise you when you are swimming?**

**Answer:** A lifeguard or responsible adult who knows how to swim

- **Why do you need supervision?**

**Answer:** In case of an emergency, someone is there to help

**Share with group:**

- A supervised swimming area is an area that has been made safe for swimming
- A supervised swimming area has lifeguards on duty
  - Lifeguards have special training
  - Lifeguards have equipment they can use to help rescue a person from the water
  - Lifeguards have first aid equipment they can use if someone is injured or ill
- A home pool with an adult watching at all times can also be considered a supervised swimming area

**EXTRA FACTS: Other tasks a lifeguard performs can include:**

- Testing the pool water to be sure it is clean and balanced
- Giving swim tests
- Cleaning or performing maintenance
- Completing records and reports
- Performing opening and closing duties or facility safety checks and inspections

# Station 1:

## Activity Options

### ACTIVITY: Outfit a Lifeguard

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Split group into two smaller groups
- Each group will have a designated lifeguard (a member of the group) that they will need to “outfit”
- Give each group the pile of pictures to choose from and have them sort through the items they think a lifeguard will need
- Give the groups a few minutes to outfit their lifeguards, then review each lifeguard as one group
- Make sure to briefly discuss with group the importance of each of the following items from the piles:
  - A uniform (swimsuit, shirt, hat)
  - Whistle
  - Sunglasses
  - Hip pack with disposable gloves, basic first aid, and breathing mask
  - Rescue tube
  - Horn
  - Sunscreen
  - Lifeguard stand with umbrella
  - First aid kit
  - Rescue equipment (Ring buoy & rescue board)

#### VARIATIONS & MODIFICATIONS:

- “Pin the Supplies on the Lifeguard”
  - To do activity as one large group, print/create a large cutout of a person to be the lifeguard
  - Have participants work together to outfit the “lifeguard” with the items provided
- Smaller groups
  - Print out individual sheets with the outline of a person to be the lifeguard
  - Cut out smaller printed pictures that participants can glue or tape on to the lifeguard

### ACTIVITY: “What is a Supervised Swimming Area?” Worksheet

- Participants can split into group into groups or work independently
- Circle or color in the images on the work sheet that show a supervised swimming area
- Draw an X on those that do not

#### IF EXTRA TIME: Ask the group: **How can you help the lifeguard?**

- After a few answers from the group provide some from the list:
- Reading and obeying all posted rules and warning signs
- Following the lifeguard’s directions immediately if you hear a whistle, horn, or other signal of an emergency
- Staying out of the way in an emergency
- Never playing with safety equipment and leaving it where it belongs
- Getting out of the water immediately when the signal is given
- Not distracting the lifeguard: do not talk to a lifeguard who is watching over the patrons in the water
- Doing exactly what you are told if your help is requested



# BE COOL, FOLLOW THE RULES



# Station 2: Be Cool, Follow the Rules

**Supplies:** Refer to **Water Safety Workbook pages 16 - 21** for printouts

- “Safety Rules” poster
- Enlarged rules for your town or organization’s facilities
- Crayons and pencils
- Additional activity sheets in case of extra time (**Water Safety Workbook pages 42 - 52 for printouts**)

**Learning Outcomes:** after completing this lesson, students will be able to...

- Identify rules for safe participation in water activities at pools, waterparks, oceans, lakes and rivers
- Explain how following safety rules can prevent accidents
- Describe a safe swimming area
- Show an understanding of local pool and waterfront rules

**Topic Introduction:** Display the “Safety Rules” poster for participants. Begin a discussion about the poster by asking questions such as, “What are some rules that you know that help you be safe in and around the water? Why are these rules important?” Refer to the poster throughout the introduction. As an option, you may use a projector to display the electronic version of the poster.

**Ask the group:**

- **What is a rule?**  
**Answer:** A guideline for conduct or action that helps keep us safe at pools and swimming areas.  
Where are some places we need to follow rules?  
**Answer:** School, home, pool
- **Why do we have rules?**  
**Answer:** Responses should include the following:  
To keep everyone safe  
To help prevent injuries  
To be considerate of others
- **What are some rules we have to obey in school?**  
**Answer:** Responses may include the following:  
No talking when the teacher is talking  
No running  
Treating others the way you want to be treated  
No calling out in class

**Share with group:**

- It is just as important to follow rules at a pool – whether a public pool or a home pool
- Do not go near the water or pool area without an adult or lifeguard there to supervise
- Never swim alone
- Do not bring food or drinks in or around the pool
- Do not swim if thunder/lightning is present
- Stay in shallow water if you cannot swim
- Only dive in areas that are deep enough (The Red Cross recommends 9+ feet)

**Ask the group:**

- **What are some rules to follow when swimming?**
  - **After a few answers from the group provide some of these key points:**
    1. Read and obey all rules and signs
    2. Swim in areas that are supervised by a lifeguard
    3. Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone
    4. Ask permission before entering the water
    5. Check water to make sure it is a safe swimming area
    6. Know where the deep and shallow areas are
    7. Use a feet first entry when entering the water
    8. Enter head first only when the area is clearly marked for diving and has no obstructions
    9. Don’t swim near pool drains

# Station 2: Be Cool, Follow the Rules (cont'd)

## Share with group:

- The best thing you can do to stay safe in, on and around water is know your limits and learn how to swim.
- Local pool/facility rules
  - Ask if anyone would like to read a rule out loud
  - Make any points while reviewing rules that are pertinent to the discussion

## Ask the group:

- **What types of swimming areas are available in your area?**  
**Answer:** Responses will vary but may include the following:
  - Swimming pools, such as the public pool at the park or at the YMCA
  - Home pool
  - Waterparks
  - Oceans
  - Rivers
  - Lakes
- **What are some things you should look for in a safe swimming area?**  
**After a few answers from the group, share these points:**
  - The water is clean and free of hazards
  - The swimming area is well marked.
  - Safety equipment is available.
  - The water is deep enough for activities like jumping or diving
  - \*Being aware of potential safety hazards can help you avoid getting hurt

## Group discussion: How could the accidents below have been prevented by following the rules?

1. **Scenario 1:** Jennifer and Tamika have just come out of the pool locker room and decide to race to the edge of the pool.
  - **Question:** What might happen?
  - **Answer:** They could fall and hurt themselves. They could fall and hurt others who are in the way.
  - **Question:** How could they prevent an accident from happening?
  - **Answer:** They should walk to the pool and scan area to make sure the pool is safe.
2. **Scenario 2:** Ian and Justin are playing tag in the water. Ian climbs out and runs to the diving board. Justin follows quickly and jumps in to tag Ian.
  - **Question:** What might happen?
  - **Answer:** Justin could land on Ian and they both could be hurt. Others swimming in the general area could be hurt. Both boys could slip and fall while running to the diving board.
  - **Question:** How could they prevent an accident from happening?
  - **Answer:** They should walk to the diving board, take turns jumping and scan the water to make sure it is clear of any swimmers.

## Station 2: Activity Options

### ACTIVITY: “Safe or Not Safe”, “Pool Rules”, & “Pool Patrol” Worksheets

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Hand out “Safe or Not Safe” worksheet (kids can partner off if they want)
- Have participants circle pictures that show safe swimming situations and put an X on the pictures that show unsafe swimming situations.
- Hand out “Pool Rules” (ages 7+) worksheet or “Pool Patrol” (ages 4+) worksheets depending on their age.
- Review worksheets

### ACTIVITY: Lifeguard May I? *(Courtesy of Dr. Jennifer Masone)*

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- One player is the designated Lifeguard, the other players are designated swimmers
- Lifeguard stands on one side of the gym and swimmers stand in line shoulder to shoulder on the opposite side of the gym (distance to be determined by age and ability)
- Swimmers take turns asking the Lifeguard if they can proceed a certain number of steps or not
- Lifeguard will reply “yes” or “no” to the swimmers
- Lifeguard may offer a suggestion that the Swimmer MUST follow, such as:
  - Wear your life jacket
  - Go with a partner
  - Take X steps forward
  - Take X steps backwards.
- The first Swimmer to reach the Lifeguard wins the game and becomes the Lifeguard.

#### VARIATIONS & MODIFICATIONS:

- Locomotor movements (step, hop, skip, run, crabwalk)
- Number or size of steps (giant, baby)
- Conditions (swimmer can proceed with a lifejacket, partner, etc.)
- If available, use scooters to replicate traveling by watercraft



# LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP



# Station 3: Look Before You Leap

**Supplies:** refer to **Water Safety Workbook pages 22 - 35** for printouts

- “Look Before You Leap” poster
- Multiple puzzles (laminated if possible)
- “Check it Out” worksheet
- Crayons and pencils
- Printout of safety equipment and their definitions
- Consider having actual safety equipment onsite for children to view (ring buoy, rescue tube, etc.)
- Additional activity sheets in case of extra time (**Water Safety Workbook pages 42 - 52 for printouts**)

**Learning Outcomes:** after completing this lesson, students will be able to...

- Recognize a safe place for swimming
- Identify the safety equipment that should be at a safe swimming site
- Explain how to check the water to see if it is safe for swimming

**Topic Introduction:** Display the “Look Before You Leap” poster for participants. Begin a discussion about the poster by asking questions such as, “Is this a safe place to swim? Why or why not?” Refer to the poster throughout the lesson. As an option, you may use a projector to display the electronic version of the poster.

**Ask the group:**

- **Who should you look for before swimming?**  
**Answer:** A lifeguard. (If at a private pool, an adult should supervise swimming.)
- **Who should be swimming with you?**  
**Answer:** A buddy.
- **What should you look for before entering the water?**  
**After a few answers from the group provide these answers:**
  - Before you swim anywhere, look at the water
  - Notice if there are any currents (moving water) or waves
  - Check the water temperature. It should be cool to warm
  - Know how deep the water is before you go in. If you cannot swim, do not go in water any deeper than waist to chest deep (depth is the distance from the top of the water to the bottom and should be clearly marked)
  - The first time in water, walk in; do not jump or dive
  - Check for objects under the surface
  - Never dive headfirst into water unless it is clearly marked for diving and obey “No Diving” signs
  - Do not dive headfirst into waves - you do not know how deep the water is since depth changes when waves come in
  - Never dive into cloudy or murky (dark) water - you do not know what is beneath the surface
  - The bottom of the surface should be firm and should not have sharp objects, broken glass, trash, jagged rocks, holes, weeds

**Share with the group:**

- **Safety Equipment:** Show the pictures of each piece of equipment provided in the Water Safety Workbook and read the description provided. You can ask the group if they know what each piece of equipment is before sharing information.
- **Look at yourself, too, before you leap into the water:**
  - Make sure you have put on your sunscreen.
  - Make sure that your feet are protected from rough surfaces by wearing water shoes.
  - **Ask the group:**
    - Why is wearing sunscreen important?**  
**Answer:** It protects your skin against harmful rays and helps prevent skin cancer and sunburn.
    - How often should you apply sunscreen?**  
**Answer:** At least every 2 hours and before and after swimming.

## Station 3: Activity Options

### ACTIVITY: Check It Out! & Partner Puzzle

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Have students find a partner and complete **CHECK IT OUT** worksheet. *Review answers.*
- Have partners complete partner puzzle. *Once complete, discuss the scene the puzzle depicts.*

### ACTIVITY: Rip Current Relay (Courtesy of Dr. Jennifer Masone)

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cones are set up across the length of the gym/area you are using to represent the water line
- One cone is set up at either end of the area to represent the end of the beach
- All swimmers line up shoulder to shoulder in the middle of the area, facing the water line
- At the whistle, swimmers run from their start location toward the water line then back to start (this can be repeated as often as desired)
- When the instructor yells, “Rip Current!” students are to turn and face the end of the Gym and run parallel to the water line.
- They may run clockwise around the end cone and reverse directions
- **Note:** this drill should be practiced while walking first to ensure all students understand the direction changes and to be aware of their peers.

#### EXTRA TIME: Ask the group:

- **Why should you look before you leap?**
- **What are some things you should look for before you swim anywhere?**  
**Answers should include the following:**
  1. Swim in a supervised area, which is an area that has a lifeguard on duty.
  2. Make sure there is safety equipment.
  3. Look around to make sure the water is safe.
  4. Check the temperature of the water.
  5. Know how deep the water is.
  6. Look out for large waves or currents.
  7. Look out for pollution or litter.
  8. Check that the bottom is free from sharp objects.
  9. Be on the lookout for harmful aquatic life.
  10. Look at yourself and make sure you have sunscreen and water shoes.



# REACH OR THROW, DON'T GO



# Station 4: Reach or Throw, Don't Go

**Supplies:** refer to **Water Safety Workbook pages 36 - 37** for printouts

- “Reach or Throw, Don't Go” poster
- Cones
- Ring buoy and/or throw line
- Reaching assist items (ex: fishing pole, rake, boat oar, baseball bat, etc.)
- Additional activity sheets in case of extra time (**Water Safety Workbook pages 42 - 52 for printouts**)

**Learning Outcomes:** after completing this lesson, students will be able to...

- Recognize the signs that someone is having trouble in the water
- Explain how to safely help someone who is drowning or needs help in the water
- Identify objects that would work for reaching and throwing assists
- Explain why only a lifeguard should go into the water to rescue someone.
- Demonstrate how to properly throw a floating object to someone who is drowning or needs help in the water.

**Topic Introduction:** Display the “Reach or Throw, Don't Go” poster for participants. Begin a discussion about the poster by pointing to each scene and asking questions such as, “Is this a safe way to help someone in the water? Why or why not?” Refer to the poster throughout the lesson. As an option, you may use a projector to display the electronic version of the poster.

**Ask the group:**

- **What do you think is a safe way to help someone in the water?**  
**After a few answers from the group provide this answer:**
  - We can help someone who is having trouble in the water without getting wet
  - This is important because you need to stay safe!
  - Going in the water to help someone who is having trouble could cause you to get in trouble too
  - When helping someone in the water it is always best to reach or throw, don't go
  - We are going to do some activities that will teach you how to help someone who is having trouble in the water while keeping yourself safe
- **Can you think of some reasons that people might get into trouble in the water and might drown?**  
**Answer will vary but may include the following:**
  - If they are in the water over their head and can't swim
  - If they become too tired or too cold
  - If they panic in the water
- **Use poster:** what does the poster show that you can do without getting in the water to help someone who is drowning or needs help in the water?  
**Answer:** Reach or throw, don't go!

**Share with the group:**

- **Signs of Trouble:**
  - A person can get into trouble in the water for a many different reasons
  - The person may become tired or suddenly ill or may get a cramp
  - Someone who is in trouble in the water:
    - \* May be floating or treading water.
    - \* May be holding onto a safety line or other floating object.
    - \* May be trying to swim to safety but doesn't seem to be moving forward.
  - A person in trouble in the water is usually able to call or wave for help
  - If the person does not get help, things may become worse:
    - \* His or her mouth may move closer to the water
    - \* He or she may start to get scared
    - \* He or she may be less able to stay afloat
  - If a swimmer in trouble does not receive help, he or she may drown.
  - Some of the signs a person who is drowning include:
    - \* The person is upright in the water.
    - \* The person is unable to move forward or tread water.
    - \* The drowning person is pressing his or her arms down at the sides, trying to keep the head above water to breathe.
  - The person spends energy just trying to keep his or her head above water.
  - A drowning person cannot call out for help.

## Station 4: Activity Options

### ACTIVITY: Reaching Assist

#### BEFORE ACTIVITY:

- **Discuss with group:** If someone is showing signs that he or she is having trouble in the water and is close to shore or close to the side of the pool, you should reach something out to the person.
- **Ask the group:** Do you see anything in our station area that might be a good thing to use to reach out to someone in the water? *Responses should include the reaching items you have on hand*
- **Demo for group:** If you want to assist someone in trouble in the water and you can reach the person with an object, you should:
  1. Stay out of the water
  2. Brace yourself on a pool deck, pier surface or shoreline.
  3. Reach out to the person using any object that extends your reach, such as a pole, an oar, tree branch or belt.
  4. When the person grasps the object, slowly and carefully pull him or her to safety.
  5. Keep your body low and lean back to avoid being pulled into the water

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cone off an area that is “water” & have items that students can use as their reaching tool.
- Have a volunteer lie or sit down in the “body of water” and pretend to have problems and not be able to make it back to shore
- Lay the reaching rescue items you have on hand on the floor near the “water”
- Let each student demonstrate how they could safely rescue the person by reaching one of the reaching items out to them
- Make sure students are bracing themselves, keeping their bodies low and leaning back to avoid being pulled into the water
- If necessary, have students repeat their rescues demonstrating safe practices
- Emphasize that a person who is in trouble in the water could be rescued using ordinary items
- Rotate the volunteer so everyone can rescue and be rescued

### ACTIVITY: Throwing Assist

#### BEFORE ACTIVITY:

##### Ask the group:

- How can you help a person who is out of your reach?  
**Answer:** Throw an object that floats to the person.
- What kinds of objects could be thrown to someone in trouble?  
**Answers may include the following:** kickboard, empty picnic cooler, life jacket, ring buoy, inner tube

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cone off an area that is “water” and have items that students can use to throw
- Select a volunteer to lie or sit down in the “body of water” and pretend to be a swimmer who cannot make it back to shore
- Lay several potential “throwing” rescue items on the floor on the opposite side of the room from the “water” (the items should be lightweight so they don’t cause injuries when thrown.)
- Let each student practice throwing a rescue item to the swimmer
- Tell the swimmer he should try to catch the objects when they are thrown, but he should not step out of the cones - the rescue item has to come all the way to them
- Emphasize that a person who is in trouble could be rescued using ordinary items that are usually available at a picnic or beach setting

## Station 4: Activity Options (cont'd)

### **ACTIVITY:** Throw Me a Line! *(Courtesy of Dr. Jennifer Masone)*

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Swimmers will be divided into two or three teams
- A pair of cones on opposite sides of the gym will be set up for each team
- The teams will stand behind one set of cones
- At the beginning of the game, a pool noodle for each team should be placed behind the second cone, opposite from where the team is starting
- The first swimmer will run to the opposite cone and retrieve the pool noodle, then run back to their teammate
- The teammate will grab onto the other end of the pool noodle and run back to the opposite cone
- The rescued teammate will run back and rescue the third teammate with the pool noodle
- The game will continue until the entire team has been rescued and is safely at the other side
- If a player lets go of the pool noodle or makes any contact with the other player, they must return to the start position and be rescued again



# SWIM AS A PAIR NEAR A LIFEGUARD'S CHAIR



# Station 5: Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard's Chair

**Supplies:** refer to **Water Safety Workbook pages 38 - 40** for printouts

- “Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard’s Chair” poster
- “What is a Buddy” worksheet
- Obstacle course materials
- Cones
- Stopwatch
- Additional activity sheets in case of extra time (**Water Safety Workbook pages 42 - 52 for printouts**)

**Learning Outcomes:** after completing this lesson, students will be able to...

- Recognize the potential dangers of swimming alone
- Explain the importance of swimming in supervised (lifeguarded) areas only
- Explain what a buddy is
- Understand what it means to “swim as a pair”

**Topic Introduction:** Display the “Swim as a Pair Near a Lifeguard’s Chair” poster for participants. Begin a discussion about the poster by asking questions such as, “What do you think are smart things people are doing in this scene to be safe? What are things that people could do that would make them unsafe in this scene?” Refer to the poster throughout the lesson. As an option, you may use a projector to display the electronic version of the poster.

**Ask the group:**

- Why should you not swim alone?

**Answer:** If you have trouble swimming or if something unexpected happens to you, there will be no one to help you.

- What is an emergency?

**Answer:** An emergency is a serious situation that needs immediate action.

**VIDEO:** If possible, watch Whale Tale video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3mzJUhMDlw&list=PLQac7aeJAw9DOpHtIZ5jVMadiJ13iUvUu>

**Ask the group:**

- What does it mean to “swim as a pair”?

**After a few answers from the group provide these answers:**

- You should always swim as a pair – or swim with a buddy
- A buddy is a person who helps another person and can get help in an emergency
  - \* A buddy is partner
  - \* You look out for each other
  - \* A buddy helps you follow the rules
  - \* If you get hurt, your buddy can help you or go get you an adult to help you
- The buddy system means, you never go anywhere alone; you always go as a pair
- It’s important that you and your buddy stay in the sights of lifeguard or adult who is watching you

## Station 5: Activity Options

### ACTIVITY: Partner Obstacle Course

**BEFORE ACTIVITY:** Have each student complete “**What is a Buddy?**” worksheet. *Review answers.*

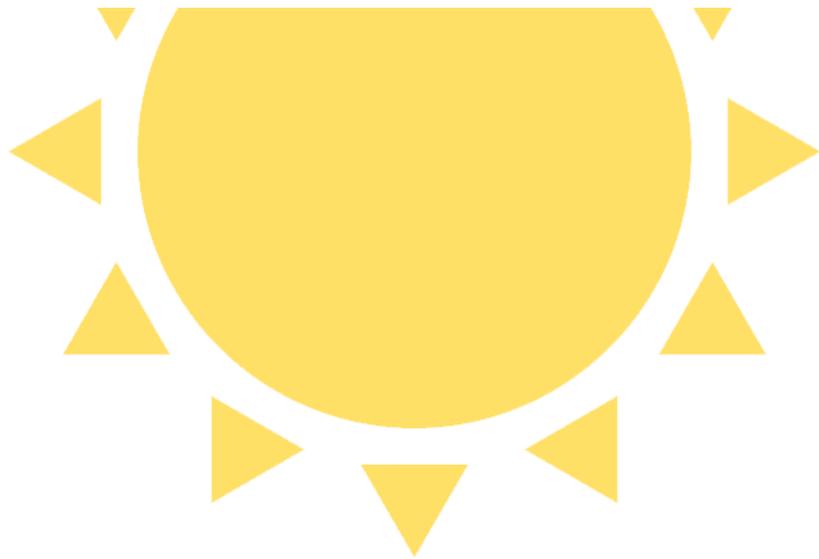
#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Set up an obstacle course (using whatever materials you have available) for groups to complete in pairs
- The partners will have to complete the course while keeping their arms hooked together. Extra time? Have them complete the course again. (Give stickers to the fastest group.)

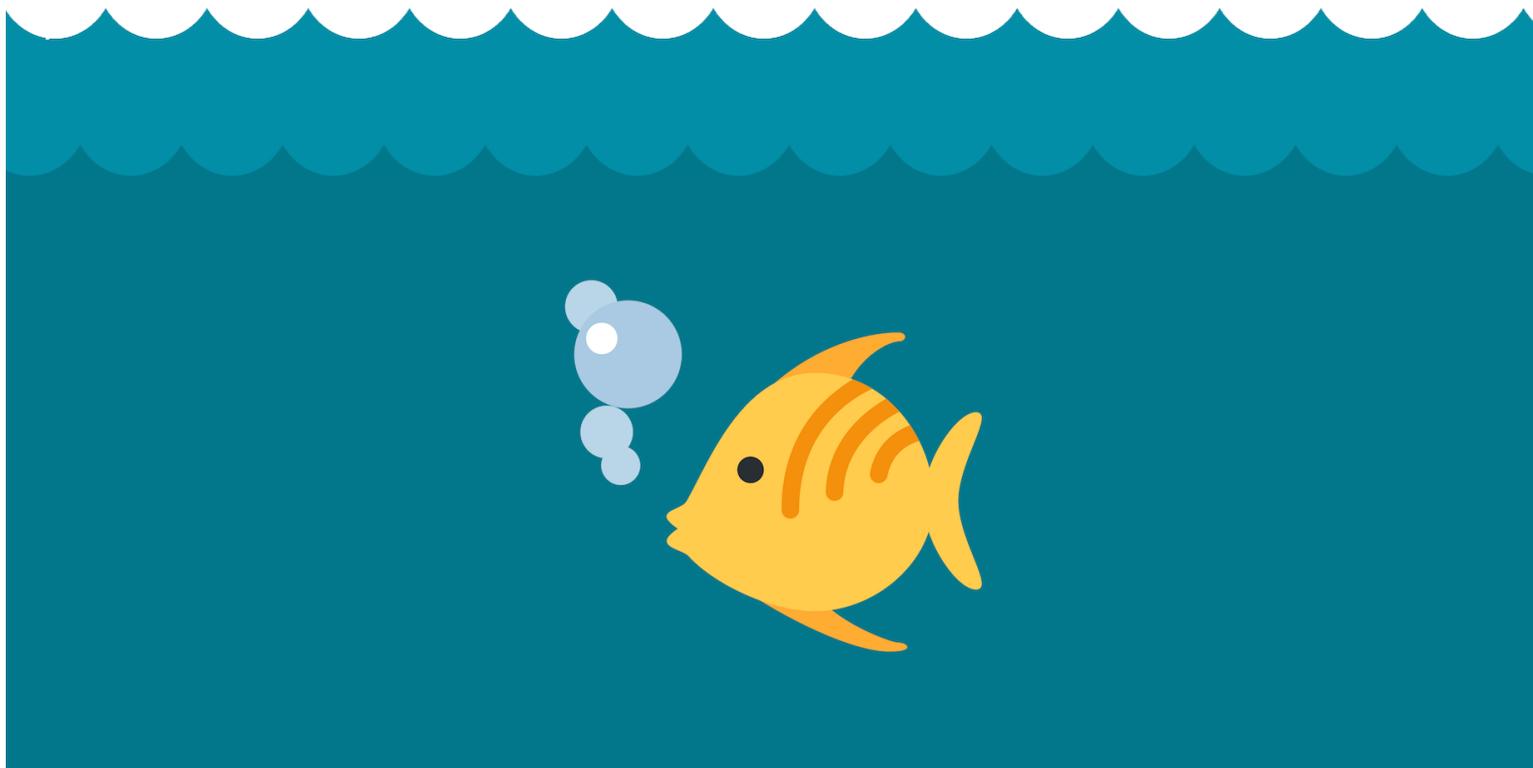
### ACTIVITY: Swim with a Buddy (*Courtesy of Dr. Jennifer Masone*)

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Set up the gym with 4-8 beaches (cones) around the perimeter of the lake (gym) depending on how many students (swimmers) participate
- Students are divided into the same number of teams as there are beaches
- At the start signal, students select one partner and one locomotor movement and travel clockwise to the next beach (cone)
- At the next beach (cone), they select a different partner and locomotor movement and travel clockwise to the next beach
- Students should travel to all beaches on the lake with a different partner.
- The game continues until all beaches have been reached. A player is out if they are not moving side by side with their partner, or if they are doing a different locomotor movement



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



# Additional Game Suggestion

## **ACTIVITY:** Musical Life Jackets (*Courtesy of Dr. Jennifer Masone*)

### **SUPPLIES:**

- Hula hoops
- Life jackets (or pinneys, if life jackets are not available)
- Music (and speakers, if possible)

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Hula hoops are placed in a large circle in the Gym; use one less hula hoop than the total number of students
- Life jackets (pinneys) are placed inside the hoops
- While the music is playing, participants walk around the outside of the hula hoop circle
- When the music stops, participants don a life jacket (pinney) and jump into the pond (hula hoop)
- The participants who either do not don a life jacket or have a pond in which to jump is out
- Students who are out can make waves by traveling inside the hula hoop circle while the music is playing
- One hula hoop is removed per round until there is one winner

### **VARIATIONS:**

- Locomotor movements (hop, run, or skip) around the outside of the hula hoop circle
- Partners (students must pair with a peer to go in the hula hoop pond)

### **WATER SAFETY PRINCIPLE:**

Always wear a life jacket when boating or rafting and when using an inner tube or personal watercraft. Children and inexperienced swimmers should wear life jackets whenever in, on and around the water when using an inner tube or personal watercraft, even if a lifeguard is present. Wear life jackets in open water, water parks, around cold water and ice, or in other challenging environments.

### **PRE AND POST ACTIVITY DISCUSSION:**

- When should you wear a life jacket?
- If you wear a life jacket, does that mean you can swim alone?

# Circle of Drowning Prevention

Layers of protection are essential to help prevent drowning.  
Plan ahead for aquatic activities:



- Provide close and constant attention to children you are supervising in or near water.
- Fence pools and spas with adequate barriers, including four-sided fencing.
- Learn swimming and water-safety survival skills.
- Children, inexperienced swimmers, and boaters should wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets.
- Always swim in a lifeguarded area.



**American Red Cross**

# Be Red Cross Ready

## Swimming Safely in Lakes, Rivers and Streams

Swimming in lakes, rivers and streams can be safe at designated swimming areas that are protected by lifeguards.

Swimming in a natural body of water is different from swimming in a pool. More skills and energy are required for natural water environments because of cold water and air temperatures, currents, waves and other conditions—and these conditions can change due to weather.

### Life Jackets Are Not Just for Boating.

Many people involved in aquatic emergencies never intended to swim in the first place. Whenever you are around water, take steps to prepare for the unexpected, such as wearing a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket, also known as a personal flotation device (PFD). Select and use the right life jacket by:

- Checking the life jacket label for proper usage and sizing and to be sure that it is U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Making sure each life jacket fits its intended user.
- Checking buckles and straps for proper function. Discard any life jacket with torn fabric or straps that have pulled loose.
- Making sure everyone tests swimming in a life jacket in a swimming pool.

### How Do I Prepare?



#### Be Aware of Water and Weather Conditions.

Whenever you are near a natural water environment, look out for:

- ❑ Unexpected changes in air or water temperature.
- ❑ Fast-moving currents, waves and rapids, even in shallow water.
- ❑ Hazards, such as dams, underwater obstacles, or rocks or debris moving on the surface or along the bottom of the water.
- ❑ Aquatic life, such as vegetation that could entangle feet or animals that live in, on or around the water.
- ❑ Sudden drop-offs that change water depth.
- ❑ Other people's activities in the same waters, such as boating.

#### Make Smart Choices.

Planning ahead and staying informed can help keep everyone in your group safe. Remember to:

- ❑ Be aware of the potential hazards of the area you are visiting and take appropriate precautions.
- ❑ Check water and weather conditions before your trip and frequently during your stay.
  - Watch for signs of severe weather and leave the water at the first indication of thunder and lightning. In the event of an electrical storm, stay inside an enclosed area for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap. If outside, avoid open areas, tall, isolated trees or metal objects.\*
- ❑ Know the abilities of those going with you, including swimming abilities and level of supervision required. Be sure to provide appropriate supervision.

\*Source: National Weather Service

### What Do I Do at the Waterfront?



#### Practice Water Safety.

- ❑ Ensure that everyone in your family learns to swim well by enrolling them in age-appropriate learn-to-swim courses.
- ❑ Swim only in areas that are designated for swimming with buoys and ropes and are supervised by lifeguards.
- ❑ Keep children under constant active supervision and remain free from distractions. Ensure that inexperienced swimmers stay within arm's reach.
- ❑ Have weak swimmers wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets whenever they are in, on or around water. Do not rely upon water wings or inflatable toys; they can enable swimmers to go beyond their ability or suddenly deflate, which could lead to a drowning situation.

#### Set and Enforce Rules.

- ❑ Always swim with a buddy.
- ❑ Always enter unknown or shallow water cautiously, feet first.
- ❑ Dive only in water clearly marked as safe for diving. Diving areas should be at least 9 feet deep with no underwater obstacles.
- ❑ Do not enter the water from a height, such as a tree, ledge or bridge.
- ❑ Be careful when standing to prevent being knocked over by currents or waves.
- ❑ Do not use alcohol and/or drugs before or while swimming, diving or supervising swimmers.

#### Prevent Recreational Water Illnesses.

Natural water can become contaminated from sewage, animal waste and water runoff following rainfall. Swimming or playing in unsafe water may result in illnesses. It is important to:

- ❑ Avoid swallowing the water.
- ❑ Contact your state or local health department for results of water testing in your area.
- ❑ Avoid swimming after rainfalls or in areas identified as unsafe by health departments.

### How Do I Respond?



#### Know How to Respond in an Emergency.

- ❑ If a child is missing, always check the water first! Seconds count in preventing death or disability from drowning.
- ❑ If present, always alert the lifeguard in the event of an emergency.
- ❑ Know how and when to call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.
- ❑ Learn how to respond to aquatic and other emergencies by taking Red Cross first aid, CPR and water safety courses.
- ❑ Have appropriate equipment, such as reaching or throwing equipment, a cell phone, life jackets and a first aid kit.

#### If Someone Is in Trouble in the Water:

- ❑ Reach out to the person using any available object that will extend your reach, such as a pole, an oar, a tree branch, a belt or a towel. Brace yourself to keep from losing your balance.
- ❑ Throw anything that will provide the victim support, such as a foam cooler or inner tube. A floating object with a line attached is best so you can pull the person to safety.
- ❑ If the water is shallow and calm, put on a life jacket, wade into the water and reach toward the person with a pole, branch, life jacket or other object.
  - Do not enter the water if a current or waves make wading dangerous.
- ❑ Keep yourself safe. In most cases, only trained professionals should enter the water to perform a rescue.

#### Caution: No One Is "Drownproof."

Participation in any swim lesson program cannot "drownproof" your child, despite what some may claim. No child is ever "drownproof" or water safe.

- ❑ Water safety and learn-to-swim courses should be age-appropriate.
- ❑ Learning to swim well takes time. Do not expect that children will learn to swim in one set of lessons or even in one season.