



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®
The Lifeguarding Experts

Proper supervision is essential for summer water safety

Spending time in and around water is lots of fun, especially for young children. However, drowning is the second leading cause of preventable death for kids under 10 years of age, and children under five are most at risk.

The backyard pool is the most common place where children under five drown. Drowning can occur in as little as 10 seconds and in just inches of water. Parents and caregivers are advised to be vigilant around all types of water – bathtubs, pools, beaches, even splash pads.

Here are some tips for effective supervision:

- Never leave children alone near water. And stay close – always within arms' reach.
- Use a tool like the *On Guard* card – worn around the neck to designate a specific adult who is responsible for supervising children in or around water. Give the card to another adult to take over if you need to turn away for any reason.
- Make sure to give 100% of your attention when supervising. Put cellphones, magazines and barbecue duties aside.
- Watch the face – especially the eyes. Many victims don't call, wave, or signal for help because they can't keep their head or arms above water.
- At the pool, the lake, or the beach, young children and non-swimmers should wear a lifejacket or personal flotation device (PFD).
- Never rely on a single measure to prevent young children from getting into a pool. Use multiple barriers or strategies like four-sided fencing to restrict access.

In addition to supervision, swimming is a life skill that every child should learn – and the Lifesaving Society points out that teaching survival swimming skills to children is like an immunization against drowning. They recommend taking Parent & Tot lessons at your local pool to give toddlers a positive introduction to water, and enrolling older children into swimming lessons. More information about the *On Guard* card and additional water safety tips are available at www.lifesavingsociety.com.