



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

The Lifeguarding Experts

For Immediate Release

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PROVIDES \$1.76 MILLION FOR SWIM TO SURVIVE® AND SWIM TO SURVIVE PLUS PROGRAMS FOR 2023/24

Toronto, ON – November 23, 2023: The Ontario Government – by way of the Ministry of Education and its Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) – has awarded the Lifesaving Society \$1.76 million for its Swim to Survive and Swim to Survive Plus programs for the 2023/24 school year.

Swim to Survive and Swim to Survive Plus are grant-based drowning prevention and water safety programs offered to schools and school boards in Ontario. The Ministry of Education began funding these programs in 2006; the programs were paused in March 2020 and reinstated for the 2021/22 school year.

Ministry investments in Swim to Survive directly support students in the classroom. In addition to in-pool instruction, both programs include in-class lessons delivered by classroom teachers. These lessons align with the Personal Safety and Injury Prevention expectations of the Health and Physical Education curriculum and provide critical water safety information.

“The Lifesaving Society is grateful to the Ministry of Education for its continued support of survival swimming skills training for Ontario’s Grade 3 and Grade 7 students. Swim to Survive and Swim to Survive Plus remain important given most youth missed out on the opportunity for swim instruction during the pandemic,” says Lifesaving Society Senior Research Officer Lisa Hanson Ouellette.

“Knowing how to swim and what to do in a drowning or water emergency are basic life skills every child and youth needs,” said Minister of Education Stephen Lecce. “Ontario is proud of its continued partnership with the Lifesaving Society of Ontario and the progress we’ve made to help ensure students have the opportunity to learn and practice swimming survival skills.”

Swim to Survive teaches Grade 3 students the essential minimum skills required to survive an unexpected fall into deep water (the Swim to Survive “standard”):

- ROLL entry into deep water
- TREAD water for one minute
- SWIM 50 metres

Swim to Survive Plus is designed to build on the skills taught in Swim to Survive and is geared toward presenting real-life situations for students in Grade 7. Participants learn:

- How to ROLL, TREAD and SWIM with clothes on
- How to help a friend in deep water without putting themselves in danger
- Basic physical fitness concepts through interval training and a fitness swim

Funding from the Ministry for the Swim to Survive programs prompts community partners to help deliver the program in local communities throughout the province. These partners (such as PPL Aquatic Fitness and Spa Group, provincially funded schools and school boards, municipalities, YMCAs and school bus companies) sponsor over half the costs of the program.

The drowning problem

Basic swimming ability is a fundamental requirement in any meaningful attempt to eliminate drowning in Canada and teaching young children basic survival swimming skills can have a life-long immunization effect against drowning.

Drowning is the second leading cause of preventable death in Canada for children under the age of 10. The World Health Organization's *Global Report on Drowning: Preventing a Leading Killer* recommends teaching school-aged children basic swimming, water safety and rescue skills as one of 10 key actions to prevent drowning.

Swim to Survive is not a replacement for swimming lessons. Swim to Survive teaches just the essentials needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water – an important first step to being safe around water. The Lifesaving Society strongly encourages parents to enroll their children in swimming lessons.

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