

Importance of Swim Lessons



Swimming can be great fun for all ages! Not only is swimming fun, but it can be a great way to make friends, spend time with family, and provide exercise and social development.

Learning to swim is an important life skill and should be a priority for every family! Knowing how to swim can help prevent drowning, which is the 2nd leading cause of unintentional injury death for children under 14 according to [USA Swimming](#), with the highest rates among children ages 1 to 4 years old. According to [USA Swimming](#), formal swimming lessons reduces the likelihood of childhood drowning by 88%.

Resources

- [Swimming lessons save lives: What parents should know - Harvard Health](#)
- [Swim Lessons: When to Start & What Parents Should Know - HealthyChildren.org](#)
- [Swimming Lessons for Kids | Learn to Swim | Red Cross](#)
- [Learn-to-Swim](#)
- [Red Cross Training | Take a Class | Red Cross](#)
- [Water Safety for Teens](#)

When Should My Child Learn to Swim?

Children can begin to learn to swim as early as 1 year of age! However, keep in mind your child's emotional maturity, physical and developmental abilities, limitations, and comfort level in mind. According to [Harvard Health](#), children don't really have the cognitive skills to learn to swim until they are around 4 years old as they need to be able to listen and follow directions. However, swimming lessons between 1 to 4 years old can be useful to learn skills if they fall into the water, like getting back to the side of the pool. For children ages 1 to 4 years old, classes that include both parents and children are a great way to introduce water safety habits and readiness skills.



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What Should I Look for When Choosing Swim Lessons?

Look for programs that:

- Have experienced, qualified instructors. Instructors should be trained and certified through a nationally recognized learn-to-swim curriculum
- Have an appropriate ratio of kids to teachers
- Have lifeguards on duty who have current CPR and First Aid certification
- Teach safety habits in, on, and near water
- Teach what to do if they end up in the water unexpectedly
- Let you, the parent, observe a class first to see if it is right for your child
- Require multiple lessons
- Maintain water purity/clean pools



How to Supervise Your Child in or Near Water?

Be sure to supervise your child near water! Just because your child is learning or can swim, doesn't mean they can't drown. According to [Healthy Children](#), "Drowning is quick, silent, and much more common than most families realize. It happens every day to children with loving, attentive parents and caregivers." Children can easily get tired, hurt, trapped, snagged, or disoriented. Always wear life jackets for boating or other water sports. Be sure to pay close attention and do not be distracted with other activities such as playing games, using your cell phone, reading, etc. For younger or weaker swimmers, get in the water with them. Do not leave a baby or young child in or near any body of water under the care of another child! Lastly, know how to recognize signs of distress and respond when there is trouble. It's recommended parents and Caregivers learn CPR. Search for a class here: [Red Cross- Take a Class](#).



Water Safety for Teens:

Keeping teens safe from the water can be challenging, even if they have completed water safety training or are a confident swimmer. Spending time near or on the water can be a favorite past time for teens, especially away from parental supervision. According to American Academy of Pediatrics, adolescents (15-19 years old) have the second highest fatal drowning rate out of any age group. Teen drowning risk increases in lakes, rivers and other natural water. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends families use layers of protection against drowning. Here are some important reminders in keeping adolescence safe around water:

- Make sure everyone learns how to swim.
- Continue to supervise, it saves lives!
- Teach your teen to always enter the water for the first time feet first. It is important to know the water's depth and going in feet first helps know the any hazards that may lie underwater that can't be seen from the surface.
- Choose natural water swimming spots carefully. Swimming in rivers or oceans can be a lot different than a swimming pool.
- Always wear a life jacket when boating.
- Stay sober on the water!
- Everyone should know how to respond to a drowning in an emergency.