



## Dear Teachers and Safety Educators:

Welcome to **Start Safe: A Water Safety Program for Young Children and Their Families**. This FREE program will help you educate parents and caregivers about dangers involving water—both indoors and outdoors at pools, spas, tubs, and open bodies of water. It will also help you teach the steps they can take to protect their children from drowning and water-related injuries.

*Why is it important to talk to families about water safety?*

- Drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children ages 1 to 4.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately three children die in America every day from drowning.<sup>1</sup>
- New research shows that children ages 1 to 4 may be less likely to drown if they have had formal swimming lessons.<sup>2</sup>
- Knowing how to swim does not mean a child can't or won't drown. We need to protect children in many ways, especially by making sure an adult is close by and paying attention when children are in or near water. It is also important to use fences and gates to keep children from getting near water when an adult is not there.

**Start Safe: Water Safety** includes tools to help you raise awareness among parents and caregivers about water safety. It also includes fun materials for you to use with 2- to 4-year-olds to help prepare them to make safe decisions around water.

The program has been sent to preschool teachers, fire and life safety educators, and injury prevention experts. It is our hope that teachers and safety educators will work together to present the program to children and their caregivers. This partnership approach proved very successful in pilot tests of our earlier program, **Start Safe: Fire & Burn Safety**. We've included tips in the instructor's guide based on feedback from these tests to help you work effectively as partners to use this program in your community.

To get started:

1. Review the **Start Safe: Water Safety** Instructor's Guide. It explains the program and how to use it effectively with children and their caregivers.
2. Teachers: Meet with your directors to determine the best way to share the program with parents and caregivers. Also, reach out to your local fire department or Safe Kids coalition to talk to safety educators about presenting the program.
3. Safety Educators: Contact local preschools to arrange to present the program to parents and/or conduct lessons with the children. (See the Instructor's Guide for tips.)
4. Involve a parent coordinator in your planning. Offer incentives to encourage parent participation in the program presentation.
5. Follow the script. The program teaches children a few basic water safety messages appropriate for preschoolers. Through an action plan called *Lock, Look, and Learn*, parents and caregivers learn risks related to water and preventative measures to help reduce these risks.

**Start Safe: Water Safety** was created by the nonprofit Home Safety Council® (HSC), which has merged with Safe Kids Worldwide, in partnership with Young Minds Inspired (YMI). The program was made possible through a generous grant from the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) via funding appropriated through the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act (2008). In 2002, Virginia Graeme Baker drowned at the age of 7 after she was trapped under water by the powerful suction from a hot tub drain. The Act requires anti-entrapment drain covers and other safety devices on public pools and spas. CPSC has also launched the Pool Safely campaign (PoolSafely.gov) to raise awareness about these issues.

Thank you for using **Start Safe: Water Safety**. We know that there are many demands on your time. We hope that you find this program helpful and easy to use. With your help, we can keep young children safe in our communities and at home. Please complete the reply card to share your thoughts on the program.

Sincerely,

*Meri-K Appy*

**Meri-K Appy**  
President  
Safe Kids USA

*Angela Mickalide*

**Angela D. Mickalide, Ph.D., MCHES**  
Director, Research and Programs  
Safe Kids Worldwide

1. CDC. *Protect the Ones You Love: Drownings*, 7/27/09. ([www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Drowning](http://www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Drowning))

2. American Academy of Pediatrics. *AAP Gives Updated Advice on Drowning Prevention*, 5/24/10. ([www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/may2410studies.htm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/may2410studies.htm))

## INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

# Start Safe: A Water Safety Program for Young Children and Their Families

A **FREE** program for educating parents, caregivers, and children ages 2 to 4

### About the Program

Safe Kids Worldwide teamed up with Young Minds Inspired (YMI) to create this FREE program to help keep children safe around water and reduce the number of accidental drownings and injuries from nonfatal drownings.

This guide provides you with resources to reach parents and caregivers with important information about water safety. It will also help you plan and present age-appropriate lessons to 2- to 4-year-olds.

Through the program, parents and caregivers will learn messages related to three behaviors or actions: **Lock**, **Look**, and **Learn**. Under these headers, topics include:

- Know dangers that happen in and near water.
- Limit your child's access or ability to get to water indoors and outdoors.
- Supervise children at all times in and around water.
- Provide swimming lessons for children.
- Know how to swim yourself and learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).
- Have safety equipment, like life jackets, at a pool and other bodies of water.

By participating in the lessons, children will learn:

- Water is fun, but can be dangerous.
- Follow safety rules when around water.
- Always have a grownup with you when you are in or near water.
- Stay away from water if a grownup is not with you.
- Always swim with a grownup who is watching you.
- Always wear a life jacket when in or around pools and open bodies of water.
- Say "Code Red Rover, Grownup Come Over!" if you see something unsafe.

### What You'll Find in This Guide:

- Pages 2-3: How to Use This Program
- Page 4: Tips for Teachers on Getting Started
- Pages 5-6: Tips for Safety Educators on Preparing for Preschool Visits
- Pages 7-8: Topics for Talking to Parents and Caregivers
- Pages 9-12: Lessons for Preschoolers
- Page 12: Additional Resources

**Tell Us  
What You Think!**  
Please return the enclosed card to let us know your opinion of the program.



## HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

### What's Included in the Program:

- this 12-page guide for teachers, fire & life safety educators, and injury prevention experts
- 30 bilingual storybooks for students (in English and Spanish)
- one dual-sided poster with cut-out water safety flashcards
- one “look and see” poster with three water safety scenes
- 30 Water Safety Ranger stickers
- 30 bilingual water safety booklets for parents (in English and Spanish)
- an online game for kids
- an online game for parents
- a program reply card

These materials are also available online at [www.safekids.org/startsafewater](http://www.safekids.org/startsafewater)



### Getting Started

Follow these three steps to get started.

1. **Review this guide and the program components.**
2. **Reach out for support.** We recommend that teachers and school directors reach out to their local fire departments or Safe Kids coalition to ask if the safety educator can join you in presenting the program to parents and students. (Teachers should speak to their administrators first to get their support.) Safety educators who receive the program should reach out to preschool directors. (See the following pages for tips on how to make these contacts.)

3. **Involve parents and caregivers.** Parents and caregivers are critical to the program's success. If possible, hold a special parent meeting to help the adults in your community learn about water safety and the **Start Safe: Water Safety** program. Work with a parent advisor or volunteer to help you plan the meeting, promote it, and encourage participation. Send a note home to families with the details about the presentation, and let them know that the children are going to participate in a water safety program. (See [www.safekids.org/startsafewater](http://www.safekids.org/startsafewater) for a sample invitation.)

### Tips for Creating a Teacher/Safety Educator/Parent Partnership

Teams using our **Start Safe: Fire & Burn Safety** program provided feedback on how to create an effective partnership between schools, safety educators, and parents. Here are some of their tips:

- **Communicate** – Clear and ongoing communication is important. Get to know each other and learn what will work best for your group. Find out if there are specific water-related issues common to your area that the safety educator can address with parents. For example, drownings in your community might happen in canals or lakes. In cold weather, the problem may be children falling through ice. Work together to add local facts and safety messages to **Start Safe: Water Safety** to help parents and caregivers.
- **Make a plan** – Meet to plan the parent presentation and student activities. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each partner. Decide which activities the teachers and safety educator will do with the children, and who will do them. Determine where and when to have the parent meeting, what resources are needed, and how to announce the meeting. Create a planning schedule.
- **Encourage parent participation** – If you are hosting a parent meeting, choose a time that works best for the parents and caregivers. If it is an after-work event, perhaps a teacher can do the poster and storybook lessons with the children in one room while the safety educator speaks to the parents in another. Be sure to

get the word out to parents. Use what works best for your group—create a sign-up sheet, do phone or email reminders, create posters, send notes home, etc. If your community recently experienced a water-related tragedy, consider including a news article with the invitation to remind parents about the seriousness of the issue.

- **Prepare and practice** – Safety educators who present lessons to children should consider observing the classroom first so that they become familiar with the setting and how the class works. Those presenting to parents should practice so that they can deliver all the messages in the scheduled time.

### Using This Guide

Discussion questions and information in this guide are a key part of this program. It is important that the messages you deliver to children and parents are the same as those in the materials. (Scripting has been provided in *italics*, and answers to questions are in parentheses.) The information is based on what we currently know about effective safety practices for families with young children. Please use the prompts to engage students and reinforce learning. While the material focuses on 2- to 4-year-olds, other important information is covered since families may have younger or older children too.

### Planning the Parent & Caregiver Presentation

Review the “Topics for Talking to Parents & Caregivers” (pages 7-8) and the parent booklet to prepare your presentation. Time recommendations have been provided to help you plan. Try to include time for questions and answers following the presentation. Find out what organizations in your area offer free swimming lessons for adults and children ages 2 to 4 so that you can share that information with parents. The parent booklet lists three organizations that you might check.

### Planning the Lessons for Students

The program should be used over several days with children. The time chart at the right can help you plan the student lessons and discussions. Time estimates are included to help you plan, but teachers know what works best with their groups.

Lesson/Topic	Estimated Time Needed
Introducing the Program	5 minutes
Lesson 1: We Are Water Safety Rangers (using the poster)	15-20 minutes
Lesson 2: Wiggle and Giggle Learn about Pool Safety (using the storybook)	10-15 minutes
Lesson 3: Meet Lucy Lifeguard (using the storybook)	5 minutes
Lesson 4: Get Wet! or Not Yet! (using the flashcards)	10-15 minutes
Lesson 5: Float or Sink – A Water Experiment	10-15 minutes
Lesson 6: Code Red Rover, Grownup Come Over!	10 minutes
Lesson 7: Sing-Along Water Songs	10-15 minutes
Optional Lesson: Pool Walk	20 minutes

### National Education Standards\*

The student lessons meet the following education standards for preschool:

- *Health*: Knows essential concepts and practices concerning injury prevention and safety
- *Language Arts*: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process; Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes
- *Life Skills*: Contributes to the overall effort of a group; Displays effective interpersonal communication skills
- *Music*: Sings, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

\*Source: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning ([www.mcrel.org](http://www.mcrel.org))

### Using the Posters

Before using the posters, consider laminating them to help make them last. Then, cut the dual-sided poster to create nine flashcards.

## TIPS FOR TEACHERS ON GETTING STARTED

### Reach Out to a Safety Expert

Before starting the program, contact your local fire department or Safe Kids coalition to invite a safety educator to visit your classroom or school to talk to parents and children about water safety. If the safety educator in your community did not receive **Start Safe: Water Safety**, he or she can download a copy of the program at [www.safekids.org/startsafewater](http://www.safekids.org/startsafewater). Be sure to tell the safety educator about any special needs or considerations they should be aware of when working with your students or parents.

Since raising parent awareness about water safety is key to the program's success, ask the safety educator to host a separate event for parents. The safety educator can go over the messages in the parent booklet and parents can ask questions about swimming lessons, pool drains, fences, etc.

If a safety educator is unavailable, we encourage you and your colleagues to present the material to parents using the "Topics for Talking to Parents & Caregivers" (pages 7-8). During the meeting, if parents have questions that you need help answering, arrange to send these questions to the safety educator to answer after your meeting. Then, send a follow-up letter home to parents

with the answers. You should also review the answers the next time you meet with the parents.

### Involve a Parent Coordinator

Before you plan your parent presentation or do the lessons with the children, ask your parent involvement member, policy coordinator, or a parent volunteer to work with you. This parent coordinator can assist in organizing and preparing the presentation, and most importantly, help you get other parents and caregivers to attend the presentation.

### Host an Event for Parents and Caregivers

Work with your colleagues, parent volunteers, and safety educators to coordinate a family event. Here are some ideas you might use:

- Host a "Here Comes Summer" event and serve fresh summer fruits. Introduce the program and encourage family participation.
- Coordinate child-care services at the school so that parents can meet with the safety educator at an after-work event.
- Reach out to local merchants or manufacturers for donations that can be given out as door prizes at the meeting. Gift certificates for U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets and coupons for free swimming lessons would make great prizes.
- Set up the student lessons and topics as stations that families go through together.
- Have the children perform the water safety songs before starting the parent meeting.
- Invite an expert from your local YMCA or American Red Cross to talk to parents about swimming lessons.
- Host the parent presentation poolside to point out key safety features.

### Keep Water Safety Top of Mind

When you finish the **Start Safe: Water Safety** lessons with your students, send a note home to their families to recap what the children learned about water safety. Encourage parents to ask their children about what they learned and to review the appropriate safety messages from the parent booklet with their children.



# TIPS FOR SAFETY EDUCATORS ON PREPARING FOR PRESCHOOL VISITS

## Contacting Your Local Preschool

The guidelines below will help you work with a preschool to use **Start Safe: Water Safety**.

- Find your local Head Start, Early Head Start Center, or preschool. (Go to <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices> to find centers.)
- Meet with the preschool director to explain that you would like to speak to the staff, parents, and children about water safety and drowning prevention.
- Find out whether the school received the **Start Safe: Water Safety** program. (A downloadable copy is available at [www.safekids.org/startsafewater](http://www.safekids.org/startsafewater).)
- Offer to give a presentation for parents and caregivers on water safety. Explain that delivering the safety messages to the adults is critical. You might speak to parents and children together, and then meet with the adults separately to explain more.
- Find out whether the school will be using Spanish or English materials. Bring a bilingual colleague or translator if necessary.
- Find out if there are any families in the school's community who have experienced a drowning tragedy or nonfatal drowning injuries so that you can keep their feelings in mind.

## Coordinating a Parent & Caregiver Presentation

Provide a copy of this guide to the teacher or director working with you. Then, together:

- Set a time for your presentation and create a planning schedule to help you organize your event.
- Use the tips on pages 2-3 to coordinate and plan when, where, and what you will present to the parents. Remember to keep the communication open during the planning process.
- Go over the "Topics for Talking to Parents & Caregivers" section (pages 7-8) to review the information that you will cover.
- Practice your presentation, and confirm the meeting details before the event.
- Follow up with the school immediately after the presentation to see if the parents had any questions about water safety after the meeting.



## Coordinating a Classroom Visit

If you are presenting lessons to the children, use these steps to help you plan your classroom visit with the teacher once you've set a date and time to visit the school:

- Find out what the students have already learned about water safety.
- If the teacher has already used **Start Safe: Water Safety** or another program with students, ask which topics you should reinforce. If water safety has not been covered, discuss the information you would like to present.
- Tell the teacher about the components and topics in the **Start Safe: Water Safety** program and approximately how long it would take to present each of them. (See pages 2-3.)
- With the teacher, choose the activities that will work best for your presentation.
- Do not try to cover all the material in one visit. Present a few topics at a time, and keep your presentations short—no more than 20 minutes.

- Ask the teacher to remain in the classroom during your visit.
- Have the teacher brainstorm with students a list of questions to give you beforehand.
- Ask the teacher about the class and any special needs or considerations.
- Leave copies of materials you don't have time to cover so that the teacher can present the lessons.



### Tips for Talking to Preschool Children

Preschool-aged children learn by seeing and doing, practicing, modeling, and repeating. When presenting to them:

- Introduce yourself and say why you are visiting.
- Sit in a low chair or on the floor with the children.
- Be brief. Don't over-explain!
- Use positive language. Say what to do rather than what not to do.
- Use simple facts and simple language.
  - Avoid technical explanations.
    - Don't use scare tactics or talk about scary things.
    - Repeat key messages.
    - Use visuals, but do not show children drowning images.
    - Be prepared to gently redirect their focus if they "wander" from the topic.

### Be Prepared

Whether you are presenting to parents and caregivers, children, or both groups, review the content and topics covered in the program. As you prepare, remember to:

- Keep to the topics you and the teacher agreed you would present.
- Confirm the amount of time you have.
- Make sure any needed resources will be available to you.
- Find out how many adults and/or children will be attending.
- Use the discussion prompts, questions, and answers provided in this guide.
- Focus on the key messages.
- Be enthusiastic and make your presentation as interactive as possible.
- Practice your presentation so that you know how much time it will take.
- Allow time to answer questions at the end.
- Take the **Start Safe: Water Safety** program and any demonstration props you may need like a life jacket, rescue pole, ring buoy, rescue tube, cell phone, etc.
- Prepare a list of experts in your area who do pool drain inspections or replacements, and the best places to buy U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets so you can share this with parents.

Consider contacting the directors at your local recreational centers and summer camps to offer to present **Start Safe: Water Safety** to parents and children.



## TOPICS FOR TALKING TO PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

### Introducing Start Safe (Time Estimate: 10 minutes)

Welcome parents and caregivers and thank them for coming to the **Start Safe: Water Safety** presentation. Let them know that they are the most important people in their children's lives—this includes protecting their children from drowning and water injuries. Then, provide them with an overview of the program messages.

Explain that:

- *We are here today to talk about water safety because drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children ages 1 to 4.<sup>1</sup>*
- *On average, about 10 people drown each day in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Approximately three of these are children.<sup>1</sup>*
- *For every fatal drowning, another two children receive emergency care treatment and two more are hospitalized due to nonfatal drowning injuries.<sup>3</sup> These can be serious and can cause health issues like brain damage.*
- *Drowning rates are higher for African American, American Indian, and Alaskan Native children than for white children.<sup>2</sup>*
- *Today, we are going to talk about three key actions or behaviors that parents and caregivers must do to help protect their children around water: **Lock, Look, and Learn.***
- *We need to do all three of these things together to help keep our children safe around water.*

Use the “Water Safety Tips” booklet as a guide for presenting the messages to parents about these topics.

Distribute the booklets. For each category, read the introduction in this guide to parents and then read the numbered tips in the booklet. Refer back to this guide to share the information listed here for the corresponding tips. (There aren't additional talking points for all tips.) Read the conclusion before going on to the next segment.

Use props or large clear pictures of items such as life jackets, rescue tubes, rescue poles, etc., to show parents. Also, consider making large posters of the words **lock**, **look**, and **learn** to put on the wall.

### Explaining the Importance of Lock — Stop your child from getting to water (Time Estimate: 15 minutes)

Explain:

**Introduction:** *Most drownings of children under 1 year of age happen in buckets, toilets, and bathtubs.<sup>2</sup> Their bodies*

*are top heavy, which means they can fall in when they bend over to look in, and also that they can't get out. For children ages 1 to 4, most drownings happen in residential or backyard swimming pools.<sup>2</sup> We need to stop our children from getting to water to help prevent drowning.*

**Tip 2:** *Go through your house and yard to see where there may be water dangers like toilets, bathtubs, spas, and buckets.*

**Tip 5:** *Having a fence that goes completely around your pool, spa, or hot tub with a gate that closes by itself and locks will help protect your children. It will also protect others from wandering into danger.*

**Tip 9:** *To stop your child from getting to blow-up pools or soft-sided kiddie pools, empty them and put them away when you are not using them. Otherwise, the sides could collapse when kids lean on them and they can fall in. It only takes a small amount of water for kids to drown.*

**Tip 11:** *Remove all toys from pool areas when you leave so that children don't try to go to the pool to get them.*

**Conclusion:** *If you live near a lake, pond, stream, canal, or other open water, check to see what fencing or other barriers they have. In most cases, there will be no barrier like a fence or gate to stop people from getting to the water.*

*Remind your children that they can only go near water when they are with a grownup. While they may be too young to understand, it is important to start talking to them about the rules at a young age.*

### Explaining the Importance of Look— Keep your eyes on your children at all times (Time Estimate: 15 minutes)

Read the tips in the booklet and explain the following:

**Introduction:** *Kids are used to being around water in bathtubs, but they may not know water can be dangerous. That's why constant supervision or always watching our children when they are in and around water is extremely important to help protect them.*

*Drowning tends to be fast and quiet. So if you are not looking at your children, you may not realize they are in trouble.*

**Tip 1:** *Kids move quickly, so it is really important that we don't take our eyes off of them in and around water—inside and outside the home.*

**Tip 3:** *Most young children who drown in pools were in the care of one or both parents at the time and had been out of sight less than five minutes.<sup>2</sup>*

Don't put children in a tub or kiddie pool and then walk away. We need to stay and watch our children very carefully even if they've had swimming lessons and even if there is a lifeguard on duty.

**Tip 8:** How many of you have heard of “water watchers”? It's an idea that adults take turns watching the children when a group of adults and children go to a pool, beach, or other body of water to swim. The water watcher must keep their eyes on the children at all times. They don't talk to others, text, talk on the phone, read, get food, or do anything else. They only watch the children. You may have seen people at a pool doing this. Water watchers often wear a card on a cord around their necks to remind them they are on duty. This helps the kids know who to look for if there is a problem, too. If there are many children in the water, you may need more than one water watcher.

To be a good water watcher, you need to know how to swim and know what to do in an emergency, like how to do CPR.

You can print a water watcher card online at [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org). Search for “water watcher card.”

**Conclusion:** Focused supervision is really important, but it is not enough. That's why we need to “lock” and “learn” as well.

### Explaining the Importance of Learn— Learn swimming and safety skills (Time Estimate: 15 minutes)

Review the tips, and then discuss the following:

**Tip 1:** Lots of adults in this country don't know how to swim. If you don't know how to swim—take lessons. It could help save your child's life.

**Tip 2:** We teach our children to look both ways before crossing the street. This keeps them safe. Teaching them how to swim could also help protect them and keep them safe. Swimming is a lifelong skill.

Fear is one reason parents don't sign up their children for swimming lessons. But we can't control where our children will be at all times, especially as they get older. They may be in a situation where knowing how to swim could help them.

New research suggests that children ages 1 to 4 may be less likely to drown if they take formal swimming lessons.<sup>4</sup>

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children should learn to swim. The timing of when to start lessons depends on how often the child is around water and how developmentally

ready the child is for lessons. Lessons may be protective for children as young as 1 to 4 years of age.

Parents need to decide if their children are ready for lessons. If you are not sure, talk with your child's doctor.

**Tip 3:** Learn steps to help rescue your children, like CPR. CPR is cardiopulmonary resuscitation. It is a rescue technique to help people who have stopped breathing. You can take lessons to learn CPR.

**Conclusion:** Taking swimming lessons does not mean children can't drown. Children still need to be watched constantly when they are in and around water. And we need to keep them away from water when there is no grownup watching.

If you have time, there are video segments on [www.PoolSafely.gov](http://www.PoolSafely.gov) that reinforce these program messages.

### Ending the Presentation (Time will vary)

Review the key messages and explain:

- Not one of these actions or behaviors is enough on its own. There are three things we need to do to protect our children from drowning. We need to **Lock, Look, and Learn**.
- Talk to your children about the water safety rules in the booklet so that they learn to be safe.
- Don't frighten your children with statistics and facts about drowning.
- Encourage them to stay away from water unless a grownup—or you—are with them and are watching them.

Ask the parents and caregivers if they have any questions. If you don't know the answers, make a list of questions and ask your local safety educator or go to [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) and [PoolSafely.gov](http://PoolSafely.gov) for help answering them. Create a newsletter with these questions and answers and send it to the parents and caregivers.

Encourage parents and caregivers to go to [www.safekids.org/startsafewater](http://www.safekids.org/startsafewater) for water safety games for adults and children. Demonstrate these games if possible, and point out the URL for the games in the parent booklet.

## LESSONS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

### Introducing the Program

Before starting the lessons, introduce students to the main characters and the program objective. Show students pictures of the characters from the student magazine.

- **Rover the Home Safety Hound** sniffs out dangers or things that are unsafe.
- **Freddie Flashlight** is his friend and helper.
- **Wiggle and Giggle** are Dalmatian puppies who are learning about water safety.
- **Lucy Lifeguard** is a swimming and water safety expert. This means that she knows a lot about water.
- Rover, Freddie, Wiggle, Giggle, Lucy Lifeguard, and boys and girls who follow safety rules are called **Safety Rangers**. Safety Rangers can spot dangers, or things that are not safe.
- Water can be fun, but it can also be dangerous or unsafe because we can't breathe under water. The Safety Rangers are going to help you learn important rules about water to help keep you safe so you can become Safety Rangers too.

### Lesson 1: We Are Water Safety Rangers

To start the unit, students learn that water is all around them and can be fun, but can also be dangerous, so they need to be safe around it. Display the poster. Look at each image and use the questions below to help students learn some safety rules and identify potential hazards around water. To simplify this lesson, tell the children what to look for in each picture. Have a student volunteer point to each element on the poster, and then read the statements to explain the images.

Ask students and explain:

#### Scene 1: Backyard

- *What do you see in the first picture?* (a girl playing in a pool, a grandmother watching the girl, a grandfather emptying a bucket, a fence, a spa tub)
- *What is the girl doing?* (She is playing in the pool.)
- *What is the grandmother doing?* (She is watching the girl.)
- *What is the grandfather doing?* (He is emptying a bucket of water.)
- *Safety Rangers know that a grownup must always be with you when you are in or near pools, buckets, spa or hot tubs, or any water. A grownup is an adult like a mom, dad, or grandparent. If there's no grownup with you, stay away because you could fall in.*

- *What would you do if you saw a little pool or big bucket of water?* (Stay away.)
- *Get a grownup before you go near water.*

#### Scene 2: Community pool

- *What do you see in the next picture?* (a pool, signs, a fence and gate, children with life jackets, grownups, a rescue tube, a round rescue float, a rescue pole, a lifeguard, a phone)
- *What Safety Ranger rule are the children following?* (They are with a grownup.)
- *The children are wearing life jackets. These are special jackets to help keep them safe in the water.*
- *The dad is wearing a tag. It says he is the "Water Watcher." He is in charge of watching the children.*
- *Is the pool gate open or closed?* (closed)
- *Safety Rangers know that only grownups should open pool gates. Never go to a pool without a grownup even if the gate is open.*
- *Some people have big pools like this one in their yards. It doesn't matter if the pool is big or little—only go to a pool with a grownup.*

#### Scene 3: Bathroom

- *What is this a picture of?* (a bathroom)
- *Where is there water in the bathroom?* (tub, sink, toilet)
- *What is the boy doing?* (He is having a bath.)
- *Who is in the bathroom with him?* (His dad is with him.)
- *Safety Rangers know that you should always have a grownup with you when you are in or near the bathtub. Safety Rangers also know that you should never play in the toilet. Put down the toilet seat when you are done using it.*

### Lesson 2: Wiggle and Giggle Learn about Pool Safety

Basic pool safety messages are conveyed in this storybook featuring Rover, Wiggle, and Giggle. Distribute the booklets and read the story with students.

Ask students and explain after reading:

- *Why do you think you should always swim with a grownup?* (to be safe)
- *Should you ever swim by yourself?* (No. Only go into water with a grownup.)

- *Can you point to the lifeguard? Lifeguards know a lot about water safety. They work at pools and beaches. They know water can be dangerous. They help keep swimmers safe.*
- *Wiggle and Giggle are learning to swim. They are wearing special jackets called life jackets. Life jackets help keep people safe in the water.*
- *Pools have drains like we have in the bottom of our sinks. You should stay away from pool drains because they can pull you under the water. Point to the drain on the side of the pool.*
- *Why should you never run at a pool? (You could slip and hurt yourself or someone else.)*

Have students practice pointing to the pictures and telling the messages so that they can do this with their parents. Also, to emphasize the messages, have students stand to act out the story as you read it again. They should:

- Say, “(Your name), let’s get wet!” to make sure they have a grownup with them.
- Pretend to put on and buckle up life jackets.
- Put hands to foreheads to create a visor, and look left to right for the lifeguard.
- Make swimming motions with their arms.
- Step backwards to stay away from drains.
- Walk in place to demonstrate walking and not running at pools.

### Lesson 3: Meet Lucy Lifeguard

Use the back page of the storybook to introduce students to lifeguards and the equipment that they use to help protect people.

Ask students and explain:

- *Lifeguards know a lot about water safety. They are also good swimmers. They help keep people safe at pools and beaches. They need tools to do their jobs. Why do you think they need each of these tools? (Point to each item.) The lifeguard uses the whistle to warn people if they might get hurt or hurt someone else. The lifeguard uses the rescue tube or float, life jacket, and rescue pole to get people out of the water if they need help. Sunscreen and sunglasses help keep the lifeguard safe from too much sun. The lifeguard has a phone to call for more help if they need it.*

When done with lessons 2 and 3, students should take the books home to read with their families.

### Lesson 4: Get Wet! or Not Yet!

Using the flashcards that you cut from the two-sided poster, students will differentiate between safe water situations, and unsafe items and situations.

Explain to students:

- *I am going to show you some pictures. If the picture follows water safety rules, and is safe, call out, “Get Wet!” and move your hands like you are splashing water. If the picture is not safe or is dangerous, call out, “Not Yet!”, and cross your arms and sit down.*

Go through each picture to explain why it is safe or not.

To simplify the lesson, introduce and explain each picture to students first using the notes below. Then show the pictures again and have students say which category they belong in.

<b>GET WET</b> safe images	<b>NOT YET</b> unsafe images
<b>1A</b> Gates and fences help keep people safe. Only grownups should open the gates.	<b>1B</b> There’s no fence or gate and there’s no grownup. You should stay away and tell a grownup.
<b>2A</b> Life jackets help keep people safe when they are in and near water outdoors.	<b>2B</b> The child is not wearing a life jacket. We can’t see a grownup.
<b>3A</b> A grownup is at the tub watching the child.	<b>3B</b> The tub has water in it and there’s no grownup. You should stay away and tell a grownup.
<b>4A</b> A grownup emptied the bucket and put it away.	<b>4B</b> There is water in the bucket. You should stay away so you don’t fall in. Tell a grownup.
<b>5A</b> The lifeguard is working and will help keep the swimmers safe.	<b>5B</b> There’s no lifeguard to help keep swimmers safe.
<b>6A</b> The toilet seat is closed. Do not play with water in the toilet.	<b>6B</b> There is water in the toilet. You should stay away so you don’t fall in.
<b>7A</b> A grownup is watching the children. Only go into a lake, ocean, river, pool, spa tub, or any water when a grownup is with you and watching you.	<b>7B</b> There aren’t any grownups at the beach. You should stay away.
<b>8A</b> There’s a round rescue float and a rescue tube. Lifeguards can use these to help people.	<b>8B</b> The safety equipment is missing.
<b>9A</b> The mom is putting sunscreen on the boy’s skin so he doesn’t get sunburned.	<b>9B</b> The girl is playing in the sun. She needs to have sunscreen on her skin.

## Lesson 5: Float or Sink

To help students understand why it is important to be safe around water and wear life jackets, introduce them to the concepts of sinking and floating. Provide students with small items to put in your water table or a large pan of water to test if they sink or float. Items could include a crayon, quarter, pencil, counting cube, paper cup, cork, seashells, toy boat, etc. Ask students to guess what will happen before they put each item in the water. Students are too young to understand buoyancy and displacement, so just explain that some things float and some sink in water.

Explain to students:

- *Life jackets help people float when they are in or around water outdoors. That's why it is important to wear one.*
- *Learning how to swim teaches us to float to keep us safe in the water.*

## Lesson 6: Code Red Rover, Grownup Come Over!

This activity is for older students. It teaches them to say this phrase if they see something unsafe. Review situations when the children might use the phrase to call for help.

Explain to students:

- *Rover wants you to learn a phrase the Safety Rangers use. It's, "Code Red Rover, Grownup Come Over!" Say this if you see something that is unsafe or dangerous. Tell a grownup you know, like your mom, dad, teacher, or grandparent. The grownup will fix the problem, although it may not be right away. Children should stay away from things that are not safe. Children should not fix the problem.*
- *Let's practice when we might say this. You see a big bucket of water. Should you tell a grownup? (Yes.) What should you say? (Code Red Rover, Grownup Come Over!)*
- *You see a child at the pool without a grownup. What should you say? (Repeat the phrase.)*
- *You're taking a bath and your mom leaves the bathroom to answer the phone. What should you say? (Repeat the phrase.)*
- *You see someone fall in a pool. What should you say? (Repeat the phrase.) Explain: You should not go in the water yourself to get the person.*

Add other examples that might be relevant to your classroom. If you feel that your students are old enough to understand when there's an emergency, teach them how to call 911 using a play phone so that they can practice. Older children should learn their street address or say where they are.

## Lesson 7: Sing-Along Water Songs

To reinforce water safety messages, sing these songs. Make up motions the children can do as they sing. Children can perform the songs for their parents. Print out pictures of the **Start Safe** characters for kids to color, cut out, and use as puppets. (See [www.safekids.org/startsafewater](http://www.safekids.org/startsafewater).)

(To the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Safety Rangers near and far  
We stay safe wherever we are  
We know when we can "Get Wet!"  
We know when to say, "Not Yet!"  
Safety Rangers near and far  
Please stay safe wherever you are!

(To the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Know, know, know the rules  
When you're at a pool  
Carefully, carefully, carefully, carefully  
Follow safety rules!

Know, know, know the rules  
When you're in a tub  
If a grownup is right there  
You can scrub-a-dub!

Know, know, know the rules  
When someone says, "Get Wet!"  
If a grownup is not there  
You must say, "Not Yet!"



## Optional Lesson: Pool Walk

If you have a pool at your facility, consider taking a tour with the children so that you can point out the safety equipment, as well as hazards/rules. Be sure that parents or caregivers join you for the walk to reinforce the message of only going near water with an adult. Try to go when there aren't any groups swimming, and arrange to meet the lifeguard if possible.

Point out the items that help lifeguards do their job, or items that help protect people: lifeguard seat, life jackets, ring buoy/float, and rescue pole. Also point out and explain all the safety signs and rules: deep end, no diving, lifeguard rules, stay away from drains, etc. Recap the rules children have learned, and the items they've seen in the program pictures.

## Ending the Unit or a Safety Educator's Visit

Before finishing, repeat the main messages with the children.

Ask students and explain:

- *Let's go over what we learned about water safety. What should you do if you see a tub or bucket of water? (Stay away and go tell a grownup.)*
- *Who should always be with you when you are in or around water? (a grownup)*
- *Should you ever go to a pool, lake, river, beach, or ANY kind of water without a grownup? (No.)*
- *What can help keep us safe when in and around water? (grownups, lifeguards, life jackets, sunscreen)*
- *What should you do if you see something unsafe that a grownup needs to fix? (Tell a grownup by saying, "Code Red Rover, Grownup Come Over!")*

To end the lessons, distribute the enclosed stickers to the students. You might also print copies of the **Start Safe** characters for students to color and take home as a reminder of the water safety messages that they learned.

## RESOURCES

- **www.CodeRedRover.org** Visit Rover's website for safety games and additional resources for teachers.
- **www.MySafeHome.org** HSC's online tool to help find and fix the leading causes of accidents in the home.
- **www.cpsc.gov** The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has information on pools and other safety messages.
- **www.PoolSafely.gov** A CPSC campaign that urges parents and children to protect themselves in and around pools and spas by practicing water safety.
- **www.safekids.org** Safe Kids, a nationwide network of coalitions working to prevent unintentional childhood injury, has resources for educators and parents on a variety of topics.

### References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: *Protect the Ones You Love: Drownings*, July 27, 2009. ([www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Drowning](http://www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Drowning))
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: *Unintentional Drowning Fact Sheet*, June 7, 2010. ([www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html](http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html))
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). ([www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars))
4. American Academy of Pediatrics: *AAP Gives Updated Advice on Drowning Prevention*, May 24, 2010. ([www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/may2410studies.htm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/may2410studies.htm))

Play the Wiggle and Giggle water safety game online with your students at [www.safekids.org/startsafewater](http://www.safekids.org/startsafewater)



A public education campaign from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission