

Water Safety ABCs for Parents

July means summer for Oregon families, and summer means fun in pools, lakes, rivers, and the ocean. Take time to learn these ABCs of water safety, and keep your children water safe both at home and out in Oregon's amazing natural areas.

Drownings are a leading cause of death for children under 14. Children need parents and guardians to take steps to prevent death by drowning.

More children ages 1 to 4 die from drowning than another other cause aside from birth defects. [\(CDC\)](#)

A is for Active Adult Supervision

[Drownings happen quickly and quietly](#) so be present and pay attention. When children are playing in or near water, they need your active supervision. This means no distractions like your phone or a book or a conversation. It also means you must be alert and not using alcohol or drugs.

Use **touch supervision** if your children are four and under, which means you should be close enough to reach your child at all times.

If more than one adult is present, take turns being the Water Watcher. While watching the water, set a timer on your

Preschool Promise is expanding in Fall 2020

Through [Preschool Promise](#), the State of Oregon is adding more state-funded preschool space in the Linn-Benton-Lincoln region. Additional information about enrollment is coming soon.

Make sure to follow [Pollywog](#) and our [Early Learning Hub](#) on Facebook for updates.



phone and give it to the other adult, then switch when the time is up. Some parents find it helpful to have a whistle or badge on a lanyard to remind everyone who is on watch duty.

B is for Barriers

A child cannot drown if they can't get to the water. Make sure there are layers of barriers (see next page) to prevent unsupervised access to bath tubs, pools, spas, ponds, rivers, and more.

Barriers include fencing, locks and/or latches on doors and windows that open to an area with a pool, alarms, and safety gates. And when water play time is over, remove all toys and floats from the area so children aren't tempted by them. Dump out kiddie pools after each use.

Life jackets are also barriers. Using them on children in pools and other large bodies of water can save your child's life.

C is for Classes

Swim lessons are for everyone! Swim lessons reduce the risk of drowning among young children under 4 years old ([CDC](#)).

Adults **and** children should take lessons to learn basic swim skills.

[CPR and First Aid classes](#) are also a must for adults supervising children. Seconds count when it comes to starting CPR and it could save your child's life.

Layers of Protection for Kids

Drownings can be prevented by parents and caretakers who take simple steps to ensure that water fun is safe. The [AAP recommends](#) parents create “layers of protection” so “inevitable, brief lapses in supervision” do not end in tragedy.

Layer One: Inside your home

The bath tub is the most well-known drowning hazard in a home, but there are others, including toilets, buckets of water, and even aquariums.

Create the first layer of drowning prevention by preventing unsupervised access to bathrooms. Use a toilet latch, and empty all containers of water after use.

And never, ever, leave a child in the bath unsupervised!

Layer Two: Outside your home

The second layer of protection is to prevent unsupervised access to water outside your home. This includes pools, spas, ponds, and anything that holds water.

Take steps to ensure your child does not go outside unnoticed, like door and window locks, doorknob covers, and/or safety gates. Even a pet door can be used by a toddler, so lock it or put a gate in front of it.



Most drownings in kids under 4 years old happen in home swimming pools. – [AAP](#)

According to the [CDC](#), pool fences are the most effective way to prevent drowning. If you have a pool or spa, regulations require pool fencing that meets specifications for safety.

Consider adding an alarm to the pool, the fence gate, and even your back door. Make sure toys and other floating items are removed from the pool area after each use so children aren't tempted. And always keep safety equipment handy.

Layer Three: Rivers, lakes, ocean, and more

Oregon families are so lucky to have access to these natural water areas. Parents can extend their layers of protection to these resources with a few simple precautions.

Always use a life jacket on children in these areas. They are literal life-savers when the unexpected happens, such as a large wave knocking down your child. The cost is always worth it! Or you can [borrow one](#) from the Albany Fire Department.

When floating on rivers, check online for [water temps](#) and [known obstructions](#).

When playing in the ocean, check surf levels and tide times before going. Watch for sneaker waves, floating logs, and rip currents.

Classes for Parents and Children

Local pools are opening back up for the summer. Check in about swim class options. Many have scholarships for families who need them.

CPR and First Aid classes are mostly online right now, like these from the [Red Cross](#). They are also often offered through [Family Connections](#), [Samaritan Health](#), local fire departments, and local recreation departments.

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Pollywog Family
6500 Pacific Blvd. SW, LM-132
Albany, OR 97321
541-917-4884