

Water Safety



When you read the headlines about toddlers drowning in backyard pools, does your heart go out to their parents? Do you ever wonder if you will be the next family devastated by the tragic drowning of a precious child? Are you better parents than these people who have paid the ultimate price for a brief lapse in supervision? Probably not. Many of these grieving parents are loving and responsible caretakers. How then do these tragic accidents keep happening to good families? And how can you keep your family out of next week's headlines?

Michigan is Dangerous

First of all, realize that you live in a high-risk region. In Michigan, drowning is the number two reason for the unintentional death of children under the age of four years. So, be on high alert while you live here! Swimming pools, ponds, and lakes are numerous in our Great Lakes state and provide plenty of opportunities for potential tragedies in water.

Use Your Eyes

Also, remember that supervising children around water, just like driving a car, is a highly *visual* responsibility. The only safe way to supervise children around water is to keep your eyes on the 100% of the time.

Looking away for just two minutes is enough time for your child to lose consciousness and stop breathing. Drowning is a silent death. Don't rely on listening to keep your children safe around the pool, any more than you would rely solely on listening to drive your car.

Chose a Designated Watcher

Likewise, choose a designated "Water Watcher" at a pool party, just as you would chose a designated driver at an adult party. When you have a swim party with multiple adults, everyone assumes someone else is watching the kids in the pool. Usually, no one is carefully watching the children. Providing a "Water Watcher" tag for the one designated "watcher" is a good way to clearly assign this responsibility to one adult at a time.

Don't Put Children in charge of Children

When it comes to water safety, don't put children in charge of children. Using the guidelines of the legal age to drive a car, consider waiting until 15 or 16 years of age. This is also the youngest age that life guard agencies consider a young person old enough to train. Keeping children safe around water is a life and death matter. Be certain that the person you put in charge is mature enough to take on this responsibility.

Swim Safely

Keep in mind that driving cars and recreational swimming are both a permanent part of our lifestyle. But, both come with intrinsic dangers. Do what you can to promote the enjoyment of swimming in your family without falling prey to drowning.