

Creating a Fun, Safe Swim Environment

by Wendy Russell
and Bonnie McMaken

Now that spring is here, families are starting to daydream about their favorite outdoor activity: swimming! Swimming is a lifelong skill that parents can give their children. Kids are never too young to start learning these skills. There are many ways parents can instill in their children a love and respect for water:

1. Start them early. Lessons are the best way to encourage comfort and confidence in the water. Children as young as six months can acquire these skills.
2. Don't force them. Sometimes parents try too hard to encourage their children to be comfortable in the water. A child will be able to put her head underwater and accomplish other skills as she is ready.



An instructor helps Wheaton swimmers.
Photo courtesy of Wheaton Park District

3. Give them tools. Children learn to love the water when they feel sure of themselves. There are skills taught in swim lesson that foster this confidence.

While this love for water is important, so is an awareness of the potential dangers. Water deaths are the second leading injury-related killer of children

ages 1-14. Tips to protect your children include:

1. Supervise at all times. Parents or caregivers should always have their child(ren) in their direct line of sight and be close enough to intervene.
2. Create a protective environment. If families have a pool in their backyard they should take the proper precautions, such as putting up a fence and locking a gate around the pool at all times.
3. Give them knowledge. The best defense against water-related injuries is a good offense, meaning giving children the desire to be in the water balanced with a healthy fear of the dangers they could face by not following the rules. Swim lessons are the primary way this goal is accomplished. Wheaton Park District offers swim lessons at both Northside Pool and Rice Pool.

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