

# Water Safety for Children 6 to 11 Years Old

Children in this age group most often drown while swimming or playing in open water like lakes or rivers. Your school-aged child may be a good swimmer, but they still need to be watched around the water. In an emergency, your child may not be able to swim or get to a safe spot.

If your child has not taken swim lessons, enroll them in swim lessons or have someone teach them how to swim.

It's also a good idea to buy your child a life jacket that fits. Carry it in your car during the summer. There may not always be a life jacket to rent or borrow when you are in or near water or on a boat.

## In and near the water

- Set very clear rules about water safety. Restrict water play if your child breaks a rule.
- No matter how well your child swims, an adult must always be watching. Teach your child to swim or play around water only when there is an adult watching.
- Choose swim areas with lifeguards.
- Even if your child knows how to swim, have them wear a life jacket when swimming or playing in open water outside of a life-guarded area, in a river or the ocean.
- Assign adults to watch children in or near water at social events.
- Teach your child about water hazards like river currents, cold water, rip currents in the ocean, slippery riverbanks and sudden drop-offs.
- Teach your child to jump and dive safely. Check that the water is at least nine feet deep and that there are no hidden hazards, such as rocks, ledges, logs, etc. The first entry into any water should be feet first.



## Hot tubs and pools

- Keep your child away from your home pool or hot tub unless there is an adult watching them.
- Enclose pools on all four sides with a fence at least four feet high. The only entrance should be through a locking gate. Add a power safety cover and/or door and pool alarms.
- Lock the gate when the pool is not in use.
- If your child has long hair, put it up so that it does not get caught in the suction drain cover.

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### On a boat

- Everyone should wear and keep a life jacket on, when boating, rafting or on an inner tube. It is the law that children under age 13 wear a life jacket at all times when in a boat.
- To avoid tipping while in a canoe or small boat, go to shore if you need to change places.

#### To Learn More

- [www.seattlechildrens.org/dp](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp)
- Your child's healthcare provider

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Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call Marketing Communications at 206-987-5205 or 206-987-2280 (TTY).

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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