

Fun and Safety for Children in the Water

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With Government reports continuing to warn about an obesity epidemic amongst children in the UK, the benefits of swimming as a form of exercise are clear.

Having a private pool installed is an ideal way of ensuring regular exercise for the family and top of the list of priorities is safety. Here are some tips on how to keep your children safe in the water:

- **ALWAYS SUPERVISE CHILDREN IN AND AROUND THE POOL. TEACH THEM TO KEEP AWAY FROM THE POOL EDGE AND TO ONLY GO IN WHEN THEY ARE TOLD THEY CAN DO SO.**
- It is tempting to allow your children to go in and out of the pool as they choose. However, where water is concerned, supervision is essential, and you need to be fully alert to continually check swimmers, even older ones, when the pool is in use.
- Ensure that your family and friends know what to do if there is an emergency. Having a telephone near the poolside is advisable.
- Teach everybody to swim. Under the National Curriculum, all children by the age of 11 years should be able to swim 25 metres unaided, ensuring they have some knowledge of safety in the water. It is always good to have competent swimmers at hand who can swim to an emergency if need be. Where possible, use a swim school so that your children can learn to swim correctly and safely. Key swimming organisations include www.sta.co.uk or www.britishswimming.org
- Diving into water can be risky, so only do so, where the pool design allows for this and where the swimmer is competent. Do not dive into less than 1.5 metres of water, and even then only a shallow dive should be used. It is very easy for children to get carried away and dive into places they should not, this may be an accident waiting to happen. Do not dive where you cannot clearly see the bottom of the pool, as there may be obstructions that are hit when entering the water.
- Consideration should be given to marking the deep and shallow ends to indicate water depth.





General pool safety

In addition to safety in the water for children, the following points should be remembered:

- Ensure that drinks are supplied in suitable non breakable containers (not glass) and food is kept away from the pool.
- In the summer months, spending a full day by the pool is wonderful, but be aware of the affects of the sun. Use waterproof sun lotion and ensure that young children are covered up. Watch out for signs of sun stroke and make sure everyone drinks plenty of water and spends time in the shade.
- Check that safety fences, gates and / or covers, where fitted, are secure when you leave the pool area.
- Check the basic security of your garden and, if necessary, improve it so that a small child cannot wander or crawl in to the pool area from neighbouring houses.
- Do not allow horseplay around the pool, especially when it is busy. Users should be reminded that they need to set a good example for younger children, so acrobatic tricks should not be attempted, as this may encourage younger children to try and mimic them.



Children's safety gear

All of the items below will help your child to learn to swim, but they still rely on adult supervision.

Buoyancy aids designed to give a degree of independence, but under strict supervision. Available as arm bands, swim vests, float boards.

Baby swim seats let the baby sit properly supported in the water and able to kick freely.

Costumes with pockets contain removable floats designed for children 30 months and upwards.

Swim shoes protect children's feet from slipping on wet floor or stubbing toes against the edge of the pool.

One-piece water suits for children; gives young skin a protection factor of 50+ wet or dry.

