

Year-Round Swim Lessons Help Keep Kids Safe Even During the Winter

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Drowning doesn't take a holiday, even when the weather is cold. Year-round swim instruction is crucial for keeping children safer around water and maintaining life-saving skills.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages one to four, and the second leading cause of death for children ages five to 14.

While the majority of drowning deaths occur in warmer months (May–September), data shows that roughly 25-35% of drowning incidents occur during the cooler months (October - April), underscoring that the risk does not disappear when summer ends.



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*Lisa Zarda, Executive Director
of the U.S. Swim School
Association*

“Year-round swim lessons are important to keep kids from forgetting what they've learned in the water,” said Lisa Zarda, Executive Director of the U.S. Swim School Association. “When children stop swimming in the winter, they don't just lose their techniques; they also lose critical water safety skills. Even a short break can cause skill regression, and for every month a child is out of swim lessons, it can take a week of practice to rebuild those skills.”

Research shows that formal swim lessons can reduce drowning risk by up to 88% by teaching essential survival skills, such as floating, rolling to breathe and safely exiting the pool. Continued lessons in the cooler months also help reinforce respect for water and encourage safe behaviors

around pools and natural bodies of water.

Additionally, this time of year, water safety risks often increase when families travel or stay outside their own homes at hotels, vacation rentals and when visiting relatives. In these circumstances, children may be exposed to unfamiliar bodies of water and adult supervision can lapse.

“In the winter months, vacations often involve beaches, lakes or pools, so year-round swim lessons continue to be invaluable in these circumstances, as does the importance of assigning a ‘water watcher’ to keep a dedicated eye on kids around water,” Zarda added.

Ongoing swim instruction during the winter months can play a pivotal role in reducing drowning and preparing children for a wide range of water environments.

“Learning to swim is a process, not an event,” Zarda concluded. “Starting lessons now, before the spring and summer months, allows for practice and reinforcement of life-saving water safety skills for kids of all ages and keeps water safety top-of-mind for parents, too.”

Visit the U.S. Swim School Association’s website at <https://usswimschools.org/find-a-school> for a comprehensive list of schools that offer swim lessons in your area. The U.S. Swim School Association’s network of trusted swimming schools can help children of all ages develop confidence and competence in the water, ensuring they have a fun and safe swimming experience all summer long.

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