



SafeSplash Swim School Wins 2026 Franchise Innovation Award for Most Innovative Franchisee Support

Proprietary Dashboard and S.A.F.E.R. Swimmer Promise Transform Swim Lessons from a Time-Based Activity into a Measurable Safety Outcome

SAN RAFAEL, CA, UNITED STATES, June 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [SafeSplash Swim School](#), the nation's premier learn-to-swim provider and a part of [Youth Enrichment Brands](#), has been named a winner of the 2026 Franchise Innovation Award in the Most Innovative Franchisee Support category by Franchise Update Media. The recognition highlights how SafeSplash has fundamentally reimagined what swim lessons can deliver, for both families and franchisees.



Now in its eighth year, Franchise Update Media's annual Franchise Innovation Awards recognize brands using innovation to solve real challenges and create measurable impact across franchise systems. This year's panel reviewed more than 100 entries across five categories.

Drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1–4 and the second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children ages 5–14, according to the CDC. Most swim programs address that risk through lesson levels and time in the water. SafeSplash took a different approach: transforming swim instruction from a time-based activity into a measurable safety outcome.

The result is the S.A.F.E.R. Swimmer Promise, a structured program that promises children ages four and up will learn ten essential self-rescue skills, including floating, rolling to breathe, and swimming to safety, within one year of consistent attendance, or receive up to two additional months of lessons at no cost. The program establishes a defined safety milestone, a clear timeline, and a guarantee tied to proficiency, not just participation.

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*Chris Harkness, President of
SafeSplash Swim School.*

Behind the award is the operational infrastructure built to deliver the Promise consistently across a nationwide franchise network. SafeSplash developed a centralized Power BI dashboard that gives franchise owners and instructors real-time visibility into swimmer readiness, skill progression, and test completion across every location. Instructors take greater ownership of swimmer progress; managers can quickly identify stalled advancement and intervene. The result is stronger coaching accountability, more consistent instruction, and tighter collaboration between instructors and leadership across the entire system.

Over 10,000 children have now passed the S.A.F.E.R. Swimmer Promise Test, demonstrating all ten self-rescue skills, with over 200 new passers completing the program each week. The most consistent S.A.F.E.R. Swimmer Promise locations are outperforming the rest of the network, evidence that the program is driving stronger business performance alongside better safety outcomes.

"This recognition reflects something we set out to build from the beginning: a program that genuinely serves families and gives our franchise owners the tools to run better businesses," said Chris Harkness, President of SafeSplash Swim School. "When franchisees can see exactly where every student stands and deliver on a promise families can hold us to, that's not just good for kids. It builds the kind of trust that drives retention, referrals, and long-term growth."

SafeSplash is also the only learn-to-swim provider in the country to earn the NDPA's Platinum Seal through its Commitment to Safer Waters Program, the highest recognition given to organizations demonstrating a deep, proven commitment to drowning prevention. Backed by the National Drowning Prevention Alliance, the S.A.F.E.R. Swimmer Promise represents the clearest expression of that commitment: a guarantee families can hold the brand to, and a system franchisees can build a business on.

The award will be recognized in Franchise Update magazine, available later this year at franchising.com/magazine.

For more information about SafeSplash Swim School or the S.A.F.E.R. Swimmer Promise, visit safesplash.com/safer-swimmer-promise.

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About SafeSplash Swim School

SafeSplash Swim School, a part of Youth Enrichment Brands, promotes a lifetime of water safety

and opportunity by teaching the joy of swimming. With over 200 swim schools in its network, it uniquely combines learn-to-swim programs with elite competitive instruction, catering to a diverse clientele and allowing franchisees to pursue their passion. The progressive curriculum ensures swimmers learn the correct techniques from the start, fostering safe, strong, and confident individuals who will enjoy the water for years to come. By offering the industry's most consistent and premium learn-to-swim and competitive programs, SafeSplash Swim School aims to make a lasting impact in the community through exceptional instruction in the industry's most advanced facilities.

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