

# Water Safety and Children

## Keeping Children Safe

In the warmer weather your thoughts might turn to paddling pools in the garden and water play. While both these activities are undoubtedly exciting for children and many children with trajectory schemas benefit hugely from water play, we do have to be very careful about exposing other people's children to such risks.

### Risk for different children

**Babies** – likely to drown in water if they crawl up to investigate;

**Toddlers** – likely to drown in water if they want to experiment with it;

**Disabled child** – likely to drown in water if they do not understand the risks;

**Child with English as a second or additional language** – likely to be hurt if they do not understand the dangers related to them in English.

### Control measures should be in place to keep children safe including...

- Spills which might cause slips or falls are mopped up immediately;
- Substances added to water (soap flakes, food colouring, essential oils etc) are suitable for use by children and non-toxic;
- Toys added to water (plastic fish, buckets, pieces of sponge, toy boats etc) are safety checked before and during play;
- Children are fully supervised when playing with water;
- Water is the correct temperature for use by children,
- Carers are clear about safety rules and remind children regularly;
- Overcrowding at the pool is avoided through supervision;
- Babies should not be placed in the paddling pool on their own and never left on their own without an adult.
- Children are reminded to roll up their sleeves and wear aprons;
- Fresh water is used and changed daily;
- Paddling pools are turned upside down when empty so all water is drained from the pool.
- Bowls for animals to drink water are not left out during working hours in reach of children in case they think it is a play area;
- Daily checks ensure the paddling pool is safe to use;
- Children are reminded not to drink the water;

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➤ Telephones are taken outside so that children are not left unattended when playing with water;

➤ Towels are provided for children to dry themselves;

➤ Sun cream is re-applied after water play.

Hats and sunglasses are worn where necessary and children and babies are not exposed to the sun for prolonged periods

Paddling pools and water activities are kept in shaded areas wherever possible

**Enabling the children** to manage their own safety can be a slow process for many children. Carers need to teach children from an early age about safety in water by involving them in age-appropriate question and answer sessions which encourage them to think about danger and work out how to manage it for themselves.

For example, we are going to play with the water today...

- Who can remember what we need to wear?
- Who knows what happens if water gets spilled?
- Can anyone remember why we need to dry up after we have finished playing?
- If you are thirsty which water, do you drink?
- How many children can safely play around the paddling pool?

By involving the children in considering their own risk assessment we are helping them to think the risks through and to be more aware of what might hurt them – and we are helping to prepare them for more autonomy over their play to make safe choices.

For all children, they need education about water safety especially for holidays and if they are old enough to go out alone with friends and may go to local streams canals and rivers when the weather is hot. Please click [here](#) for up-to-date health and safety information from the RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) about water and leisure safety for children and young people of all ages and activities..