

CDOP HOT TOPIC: DROWNING

JUNE 2021

Drowning happens silently

A drowning child can't speak or control their arms; they can't cry out for help or wave to be rescued. They slip quietly under the water, often unseen.

It is wonderful to be able to enjoy the outdoors, having fun in water, in a pool and on the beach—but it is important to be aware of the risk that water poses to children and babies.

- Drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related death for under-fives.
- On average, 13 children die each year.
- 90% of the children that die are aged 1-4 years.
- 40% of these deaths are in the bath.
- Pond, paddling pool and swimming pool risks increase as child gets older & more mobile.

Tragedies like these are preventable.

All professionals in contact with families should re-emphasise the danger in and around the home. Families should be given clear, consistent messages in order prevent unintentional injuries such as drowning.

- Warn about babies being unable to lift their faces from water face down.
- Stress the need for constant adult supervision & limiting access to water (baths, paddling pools, ponds).
- Explain that drowning is quick and silent.
- Discuss drowning risks related to children's desire to explore their environment.
- Explore swimming pool risks, especially when on holiday abroad (adults relaxed, children excited, new environment etc.)

It is important to highlight the dangers a child faces when left unsupervised for even a short period of time and in the shallowest of water.



Children need to be supervised in and around water constantly.

Being in an environment where there are lots of adults or other children present, or adults are under the influence of drugs/alcohol can create a false sense of security when, in fact, children are at risk of not being supervised at all.

USEFUL LINKS/RESOURCES:

[CAPT Drowning Factsheet](#)

[Preventing Unintentional Injuries](#)

[Water Safety—RoSPA](#)

[Who's in Charge?](#)

[WAID - National Water Safety Forum](#)

[RLSS—Water Safety advice](#)

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Please get in touch with any questions/queries or comments.