

Water Safety Policy

Adapted from British Columbia Provincial Health Authority Water Safety Bulletin 2013

Water related activities have added risk which must be assessed, and appropriate safety precautions must be put in place to protect children from harm.

Take the following precautions:

1. Children must never be left unattended during water play related activities.
 - a. Teacher has to be at arm's reach to children when they are in the pool
 - b. With children over age 7 ratio is 1 to 5, staff in pool must be over 16 years of age
 - c. With children under age 7 ratio is 1 to 3, staff in pool must be over 16 years of age
2. Active supervision (direct and constant) must be maintained at all times
3. Ensure the water play activity is age and ability appropriate.
4. Keep safety equipment and first aid supplies nearby at all times.
5. Teach children about water safety.
 - a. Prior to water related field trips or activities, sit down with children and outline the rules of safe water play.
 - b. Explain that these rules are extremely important and if they are not followed, water play will no longer be an option.

Keep in mind that children can drown in less than 2 inches of water (6 centimeters). This means that water safety applies not only during explicit water related play and activities but also during regular outdoor play in the rain with puddles, or even using the washroom facilities with nearby toilets and sinks. Also watch children closely when they are in or near water.

Water temperature is also important. Recommended temperatures vary but in general, 28-30 degrees Celsius is comfortable for recreation swimming for children. Babies are more comfortable with water that is on the warmer side of this range. Watch for signs of hypothermia. If children begin to shiver or have muscle cramps, remove them from the water immediately, dry them off and help them to warm up.