



USSSA Position Statement on Prevention of Drowning



The United States Swim School Association (USSSA) is pleased to see the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) update their statement on water safety for children. For over 30 years, our association and its members have been advocating the importance of learning to swim and layers of protection around water. We welcome the support of pediatricians in educating and advocating for the safety of children around the country. The revised AAP statement mentions that “children and parents should learn to swim and learn water safety skills” and USSSA couldn’t agree more. Learning to swim is a life skill that affords many benefits to children and adults alike. The AAP recommends, “parents should monitor their child’s progress during swim lessons and continue their lessons at least until basic water competence is achieved.”

It is also important to note that swimming is one part of the multiple layers of protection to drowning prevention. The AAP points out that “five major interventions are evidence based: 4-sided pool fencing, life jackets, swim lessons, supervision, and lifeguards.” USSSA and its members will continue to do our part to teach swimming while also educating our families and the public on the importance of water safety and layers of protection. The AAP position statement also included this important tip for parents stating, “parents should not use air-filled swimming aids (such as inflatable arm bands, neck rings, or “floaties”) in place of life jackets. These aids can deflate and are not designed to keep swimmers safe.” USSSA also feels that these aids can give young swimmers a false sense of confidence in the water and that they may not be able to distinguish their abilities when not wearing the aids. We too encourage only Coast Guard approved flotation devices when around water.

Lisa Zarda, Executive Director USSSA said, “We appreciate the efforts that have gone into the creation of this updated position statement and we see this as a step in the right direction to educating the public on the importance of water competency. We are excited to see what the future holds as we work together to make a difference.” Do you or someone you know need to learn to swim? The USSSA represents over 450 swim schools and invites you to find a swim school near you at: <https://www.usswimschools.com/find-a-school/>. USSSA believes we can all swim for safety, swim for fun and learn to swim.