



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:  
Audrey Graves  
Channel Islands YMCA  
805.569.1103 x26  
Audrey.Graves@ciymca.org

## Six Ways To Help Every Child Stay Safe in the Water

**Santa Barbara, CA. – November 29, 2017** - Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children ages 5 to 14. The Santa Barbara Family offers Swim Lessons to help reduce the risk of childhood drowning, develop a lifelong love for swimming and provide children from underserved communities greater access to water safety programs.

“Regardless of a how much a child is exposed to water, swim lessons and swim safety are critical in avoiding and controlling accidents that could lead to drowning,” says Caitlin Kogler, Aquatics Coordinator of the Santa Barbara Family YMCA. Before letting children get in the water, parents should remember these few tips to ensure it’s an enjoyable and safe experience.

- 1. Never swim alone.** Parents should instruct their children to only swim when a lifeguard is on duty. The YMCA also instructs parents to teach their children to ask for permission from their supervising adult. This way the adult knows when a child will be in a body of water.
- 2. Children Must be Supervised When in the Water.** Whether it’s bath time or taking a dip in a pool or lake, parents should make sure their children are within arm’s reach at all times.
- 3. Don’t engage in breath-holding activities.** Children shouldn’t hold their breath for a prolonged amount of time while swimming, as this can cause drowning and has several other severe physical side-effects.
- 4. Wear a Life Jacket.** Inexperienced or non-swimmers should wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- 5. Don’t jump in the water to save a friend who is struggling in deep water.** If a child finds their friend in deep water unexpectedly, their natural reaction may be to jump in the water to try to save them. Even if a child is a great swimmer, a panicked person will overpower them, pulling them underwater with them. The Y’s Safety Around Water program teaches the “reach, throw, don’t go” concept of using a long object to reach for them and pull them to safety. By using this technique children can help their friend without compromising their own safety.
- 6. Enroll children in water safety or swim lessons.** Just like teaching a child to look both ways before they cross the street, formal water safety lessons teach them an important life

skill. The Y's Swim Lessons instill children with fundamental water safety skills and tools that will help them have fun in the pool safely and know what to do if they find themselves in water unexpectedly.

Learning how to swim also has multiple benefits beyond the ability to enjoy water safely. It helps children strive for physical achievement, promotes healthy living and builds their confidence. "Children enrolled in our classes learn to love the water and develop a confidence in themselves that carries beyond the pool. Swim lessons become something to look forward to after the school day or on the weekend. Some kids even go on to join swim team after a few lessons," Caitlin says. To find out how to enroll in the Santa Barbara Family YMCA's Swim Lesson program, visit [www.ciymca.org/santabarbara](http://www.ciymca.org/santabarbara) or contact Caitlin Kogler at [Caitlin.Kogler@ciymca.org](mailto:Caitlin.Kogler@ciymca.org) or 805.687.7727 x240.

###

### **About the Channel Islands YMCA**

Established in 1887, the Channel Islands YMCA is a charitable organization of seven YMCA branches serving Santa Barbara and Ventura counties including: Camarillo Family YMCA, Lompoc Family YMCA, Montecito Family YMCA, Santa Barbara Family YMCA, Stuart C. Gildred Family YMCA in Santa Ynez, Ventura Family YMCA, and Youth and Family Services YMCA which operates Noah's Anchorage Youth Crisis Shelter, the St. George Youth Center, My Home, and Support and Outreach Services.

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The Channel Islands YMCA serves over 46,000 individuals and provides over \$1.3 million in financial assistance to families in need for child care, YMCA memberships, away and day camps, youth sports, and teen after-school programs. **For more information about the Santa Barbara Family YMCA, visit <http://www.ciymca.org/santabarbara/> or call (805) 687-7727.**