

Water Safety for Kids

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Tuesday, 24 May 2011 10:20 - Last Updated Tuesday, 24 May 2011 10:24

In Arizona, where summers are spent in and out of the pool, water safety is especially important.



Rita Goldberg, a former national swimmer in Great Britain, wrote a book titled *I Love to Swim* to help parents teach their children to swim properly. "I wrote the book mainly because I felt that many young parents have little or no knowledge about the degree of safety that actually can be achieved at a very young age... Too many little ones die or are horrifically injured and I hope to raise awareness," she said.

According to Goldberg, no child needs to fear the water when his parents use the following tips to teach him to swim:

- Start young – Goldberg says that the best age to start teaching children to swim is when they are 6 to 12 months old. Learning to swim at an early age will help make it more natural for them. "Specifically, no one teaches them how to prepare their babies in the tub!" Goldberg said.
- Float to survive – Teaching children to float on their backs can help them survive in the water because it allows them to rest, breathe and call for help.
- Have a water-watcher – "The absolute most important safety rule is vigilance! There is no substitute for it," Goldberg said. She recommended making the water-watcher a physical object that is given to the person in charge. "As the responsibility changes, hand the object on so that the person is in no doubt that he or she is in charge of the watching at that moment."

Goldberg added that teaching children to enjoy swimming and to be confident in the water is important, but children must also be taught about safety and how to use good judgment. "In 30 years, I have never, and I mean never, had a child not love swimming after learning."