



Lookout Mountain resident Nina Brock with her one-year-old daughter, Ava, at SportsBarn East

Pool Rules

Top Tips for Keeping Swimmers Safe By Maria Oldham

It's summer and the kids are hot. A day at the pool, whether it's your own, a neighbor's or the community's, is the perfect solution. Unfortunately, many people don't know the basics of pool safety, and as a result, there are many pool-related accidents and deaths each year. According to the CDC, about 10 people die each day from unintentional drownings, and two of those 10 are children under the age of 15. Through education, pool etiquette, and proper planning, families can enjoy the pool this summer in safety.

#1. Guard.

If you own a pool, it's important to take every safety measure possible to keep it safe and guarded. Young children in particular can easily wander towards the pool, and drowning is second only to birth defects as a leading cause of death in children ages 1 to 4. Most of these drownings occur in home swimming pools.

If you have small children, invest in a fence at least four feet high surrounding the entire pool area. The gate on the fence should be self-closing and self-locking, and

there should also be an alarm. This way, if a child tries to open it, you'll know before he or she can reach the pool. Also, keep all windows and doors in the house secure, so children can't slip out of rooms unnoticed.

Other things to guard include:

- **Pool Chemicals.** These can be toxic and very dangerous, so be sure to lock them up.
- **Pool Drain.** Have a drain cover so that little hands and feet won't get caught.

#2. Educate.

Just as important as safeguarding the pool is educating yourself and your children on pool safety. Kids should know how to behave in and around the pool, and adults should be alert and well-prepared for any situations that may arise.

- **Learn CPR.** Many communities offer CPR classes, which will teach the Heimlich maneuver and resuscitation.
- **Take kids to swim class.** Kids will be less likely to drown if they know how to swim, tread water and get to the side of the pool. Most children can learn to swim as early as age 5.
- **Teach kids pool rules.** Teach your kids to never swim alone, never dive in the shallow end (feet first only), and never run on the deck where they could slip.

#3. Prevent.

Pool accidents can cause life-long injuries—including brain damage and paralysis—or even death. They are far more likely to occur when children wander off, are swimming by themselves, or are not under *active* supervision. The National Safe Kids Campaign found that in 9 out of 10 cases, children drowned while being “supervised,” yet 94% of parents saying they “were watching their children at the time.” Follow these tips to help prevent pool accidents:

- **Don't rely on flotation devices.** While arm floaties and vests can be helpful, never rely on them completely. A non-swimming child should never be left in the pool with just floats.
- **Have emergency devices readily available.** Keep a life preserver with a rope



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Avoid Distractions!

Put away Toys!

Have a water watcher!

Have emergency devices available!

by the side of the pool, and always have a phone within reach.

- **Put away pool toys when not in use.** Children may fall in the pool while trying to reach a toy floating in or nearby the pool, so keep toys put away while they aren't being used.
- **Always have a “water watcher.”** Be clear about who is watching the swimming child at all times

and never assume someone else is watching. Never let a child swim unsupervised.

- **Avoid distractions.** It can take as little time as two minutes for a child to lose consciousness after submersion, and another two to four minutes for brain damage to begin, so it's important for adults to not get distracted by phone calls, computers, napping or chatting. 📱