

28

EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



Royal Life Saving

ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA

FACT SHEET No.28

Children's Pool Party Safety



Q. Why is it important to supervise young children around the pool?

A. Young children are the age group with the highest risk of drowning. They are naturally curious and attracted to water but lack an understanding of the concept of danger. Children drown quickly and silently, usually without calling out for help. It is important that an adult is always supervising when children are in or around water.

Q. Which age groups are most at risk?

A. Children aged 0 to 4 years (or under five) are the age group most at risk of drowning in Australia. However, Royal Life Saving recommends some level of supervision for all children under 15. This ranges from being in the water, within arms' reach and actively supervising children under five, actively supervising from the water's edge for those aged 5 to 10 years and regularly checking up on those aged 11 to 14 years.

Q. What are some of the things to consider if you're planning a pool party?

A. It is helpful to establish some rules for the party (e.g. no running, no pushing) and discuss these with the children before they are allowed to enter the water, as well as explaining the pool layout to the children (e.g. deep end, shallow end, steps or ladders). If possible, understand who the swimmers and non-swimmers are within the group. An emergency plan should be in place in case a child gets into difficulty (calling 000, starting CPR, supervision of the other children).

Q. Is supervising a group of children at a pool party different to supervising your own children while they are swimming?

A. Yes, supervising a group of children can be difficult, particularly if you do not know the different swimming abilities within the group. Between pool toys and splashing it can be hard to see all areas of the pool. You can also get easily distracted by one child, which may divert your attention from the remaining children.

Q. What is the best way to supervise children at pool parties?

A. If there a small number of children, designate an adult who will be responsible for supervising them in the pool. If there are a large number of children, multiple supervisors may be needed so that a supervisor can be stationed in each area where children will be playing. Each supervisor should wear a Keep Watch 'Designated Child Supervisor' hat and if a supervisor needs to leave the area, they should pass the hat onto another adult who will take over and assume responsibility.

Children's Pool Party Checklist:

- Explain pool rules and layout to the children
- Understand who the swimmers and non-swimmers are
- Have a designated child supervisor (more than one may be necessary)
- If one child supervisor needs to leave the area, ensure another adult is ready to take over
- Have an emergency plan in place

Real Life Story - Pool Party Tragedy

A child drowned during a birthday party held in a backyard with a pool. The children were playing in the pool throughout the afternoon, with adults in close proximity. One of the mothers noticed her son was missing. After a search, he was found by another parent in the pool. This tragic case highlights the importance of a designated adult supervisor being on duty at all times during social functions around pools.

ROYAL LIFE SAVING HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF FACT SHEETS ON WATER SAFETY ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA.

Contact Royal Life Saving on: **1300 737 763**
or download them from: **www.keepwatch.com.au**

Proudly Supported by



Australian Government