

Aquatic Safety Training

Natalie Sanders' Gold Award Project

Aquatic Safety Training

1. Drowning is the **#1 cause of death** for children 1 to 4 years of age.
2. Aquatic Safety Training vs. Traditional Swim Lessons
3. Limitations and Barriers
4. Community Recommendations
5. Bean's Way Foundation

What is Drowning?

Drowning is the process of a liquid fully submerging the lungs causing detrimental health effects or death.

Drowning is...

- *Silent*
- *Fast*

Drowning Statistics

Centers of Disease Control

#1

**Cause of death
in children ages
1-4**

#2

**Cause of death
in children ages
5-14**

4,000

**Unintentional
drownings
deaths**

8,000

**Nonfatal
drownings**

Drownings in Virginia

From 2020 to 2024, 473 Virginians died due to drowning:



**In our community...
we experienced a
child drowning
epidemic.**

CHESAPEAKE

CPD: 3-year-old dies after being found in body of water at Oak Grove Lake Park

by: [Madie MacDonald](#), [Andy Fox](#)
Posted: Feb 28, 2025 / 11:08 AM EST
Updated: Mar 3, 2025 / 01:05 PM EST

HEALTH AND SAFETY
Amid increase in drowning deaths, Virginia Department of Health urges renewed water safety awareness

LOCAL NEWS
Toddler found in water at Virginia park in 'medical distress' has died, police say

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
News Release
June 26, 2025
Virginia Sees Increase in Drownings in Children Under 5 in Swimming Pools

VIRGINIA
Virginia faces alarming rise in drowning fatalities among children under five
by: [Chrysnel Banzonzi](#)
Posted: Jun 26, 2025 / 03:24 PM EDT
Updated: Jun 26, 2025 / 04:45 PM EDT

VIRGINIA

Accidental drownings claim lives of nine children in Virginia this summer

NEWS
Chesapeake toddler dies days after being found unresponsive in family pool

CHESAPEAKE

CPD: 3-year-old dies after drowning in family pool in Chesapeake

by: [David Lance](#), [Madie MacDonald](#)
Posted: Apr 27, 2025 / 09:51 AM EDT
Updated: May 1, 2025 / 12:40 PM EDT

VIRGINIA BEACH

Boy dies after drowning incident in Virginia Beach pool, police say

A drowning boy was pulled from a pool Friday on Five Point Road in Virginia Beach. He died of his injuries on Wednesday.

Emergency Incident Reports

522 drowning-related EMS incidents

Between 2020-2024 170 (32.6%) occurred in a pool

- 47.0% of persons were less than 5 years of age.
- 20.0% were aged 5-14 years of age

Emergency Department Visits

During 2020 to 2024 in Virginia, there were 1,477 non-fatal drowning-related emergency department (ED) visits.

- 43.5% of these were among children less than 5 years of age
- 20.6% were among children 5-14 years of age.

How Can We Prevent Drowning?

Aquatic Safety Training

What is Aquatic Safety Training?

Aquatic Safety Training is specialized survival swimming instruction designed to prepare young children for real-life water emergencies.

- *Age Range:* 6 months – 6 years old
- *Focus:* Teaches self-rescue and safe reactions in water
- *Format:* One-on-one lessons, 10 minutes per day, 5 days out of the week, for 6–8 weeks
- *Best For:* Families living near pools, lakes, beaches, or other water hazards

Why not use just traditional swim lessons?

Traditional Swim Lessons:

Focuses on stroke skills, endurance, and recreation.

Aquatic Safety Training:

Focuses on survival; floating, self-rescue, and reacting calmly in emergencies.

Why the difference matters:

Even skilled swimmers can struggle in real emergencies

- Fatigue, panic, or unexpected situations can reduce survival chances.
- The once or twice-a-week traditional swim lesson schedule may result in slower acquisition and reduce the retention of newly learned skills. Children in group dynamics may receive less individualized attention, which can also impact their learning speed and confidence. And, some traditional programs may not accept children of a younger age, limiting early exposure to swimming.



A 3 year old child, who is standing near the ledge of the pool, the parent turns around for 30 seconds to grab a towel, but the child slips into the pool.....

Barriers to Aquatic Water Safety

Access

In our area, there are few swim survival instructors and locations that offer aquatic safety training.

Availability

Aquatic safety training lessons are one-on-one sessions that have a specific time duration making it hard to schedule.

Cost

Due to the shortage of providers, difficult time scheduling, and few location offerings, these lessons can be cost prohibitive.

Recommendations and Suggestions

1. Educate community on Aquatic Safety Training
2. Consider implementing a survival swim lesson program
3. Provide private access pool time to private instructors
4. Distribute information of community providers

Meet Bean's Way

“Not One More Child Drowns”

Founded by Kim Bianchi, a Virginia Beach mother who lost her daughter, Gabriella “Bean” to drowning in 2019.

- Bean's Way works to increase awareness, education, and access to aquatic safety training.



In Conclusion

Drowning is an issue we can solve by educating our community.

Let's work together to make water safety a priority.

Together, we can ensure

"Not One More Child Drowns!"

Let's Stay In Touch

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