

Maley Swim School Applauds the AAP's New Guideline

Maley Swim School has GREAT news to share about drowning prevention! As an active member of the U.S. Swim School Association we advocate for water safety awareness and drowning prevention. On May 24, 2010 the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) updated their guidance on water safety and drowning prevention. In its updated policy, the AAP has revised its guidance on swimming lessons and also highlights new drowning risks. Jeffrey Weiss, lead author of the policy statement says, "To protect their children, parents need to think about layers of protection. **Children need to learn to swim.** Swimming lessons can be an important part of the overall protection, which should include pool barriers and constant, capable supervision." The statement goes on to say that new evidence shows that children ages 1 to 4 may be less likely to drown if they have had formal swimming instruction. This new guideline is based on the first study in the United States examining the association between swimming lessons and the risk of childhood drowning from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development published in *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* (March 2009). It indicated that ***formal swim training could reduce the risk of drowning by more than 88% for one to four year old children.*** This new guideline is a monumental change that indicates that the AAP recognizes the evidence that U.S. Swim School Association member schools have been promoting for years: formal swim lessons are a vital part of the multilevel approach to drowning prevention and water safety.

Maley Swim School advises that children should be constantly supervised by an adult when they are in or near water. There is no such thing as a "drown-proof" or "water-safe" child, but ***we can give our children the tools to help them survive a potential tragedy*** if no one is there to help them. Drowning prevention must be a multilevel approach that includes educating both the child and the parent on water safety strategies, safety behaviors around the water and ***maximizing swimming instruction by understanding it is a long-term process.*** If parents will ***stop considering swimming as a sport,*** give it priority over other sports and ***realize it is a necessary lifetime skill*** that must be learned and maintained there will be far fewer tragedies. It will be a great day when drowning is no longer the leading cause of accidental death in children under five and the second leading cause of accidental death in children under 14. Most young children who drown are in a home setting and have been seen by one or both parents in the last 5 minutes.

The AAP offers a specific 11 point advice list for parents that includes: never leaving children without adult supervision around any type of water; closely supervising children at all times; inquiring about exposure to water when your children are not in your care; installing appropriate fencing and gate systems around pools; providing swimming lessons to children; learning CPR; not using air-filled swimming aids; wearing life-jackets when children are in boats; knowing water depth and underwater hazards before allowing children to jump in any body of water; swimming at lifeguard supervised open bodies of water and counseling teenagers on the increased risk of drowning when alcohol is involved.

www.maleyswimschool.com ***Drowning is preventable!*** 601-898-7946

Please check out our website above for information on specific water safety strategies. To sign your child up for swim lessons, please contact: Maley Swim School - 601-898-SWIM (7946)