



RESOURCES

Drowning Prevention Coalition of Palm Beach County www.pbcgov.com/dpc Swim lesson information & water safety education	(561) 616.7068
American Red Cross Greater Palm Beach www.redcross-pbc.org CPR & water safety education	(561) 650.9112
FAU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities www.coe.fau.edu/card Free ASD support	(561) 297.2055
Parks & Recreation, Therapeutic Recreation Palm Beach County www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/parks/therapeutic_recreation Swim lessons	(561) 966.7088
Exceptional Student Education/FDLRS, Parent Services www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/ESE/FDLRS.HTM	(561) 434.8393
Reaching Potentials www.reachingpotentials.org Behavior therapy for children with ASD	(561) 391.1004
Project Lifesaver of Palm Beach County www.pbcprojectlifesaver.org Tracking technology for individuals who wander	(561) 753.6053

DROWNING AND CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

At some ages, children with autism are 5 to 14 times more likely to drown in contrast to children without autism. Tragically, two young children with autism have drowned in a little over two years in Palm Beach County. Age and gender are factors (boys are at greater risk) as well as degree of cognitive impairment.

Please read this information carefully, share it with all family members and everyone who helps care for your child so that everyone can be alert and take action to protect their children.

Jack Scott, Ph.D.
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FAU Center for Autism & Related Disabilities



Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners



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DROWNING PREVENTION & AUTISM



"Protect your children from the dangers of the water. We support water safety education in memory of Kaitlin 2003-2008."

Created by: Task Force on Water Safety for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Related Disabilities

Facts on Drowning

- According to the American Red Cross, it takes as little as a four-inch opening for a child to escape.
- It takes as little as two inches of water and less than 20 seconds for a child to drown.

What should parents & caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorders do?

- Educate yourself about drowning prevention issues.
- Create a plan in case your special needs child wanders away.
- Share your plan with your family, neighbors & emergency personnel and tell them about your child's special needs.
- Get swim lessons for your child & water safety instruction, including CPR, for all of your family members & caregivers.



Children with autism are fascinated by water...

Parents must take action to keep their children with special needs safe from drowning

Practice the **ABC's** of drowning prevention:

- **A**dult Supervision
- **B**arriers
- **C**lasses on water safety education, swim lessons and CPR

Adult Supervision is the most important prevention measure. Even for children who can swim, it is critical to have watchful eyes 100% of the time.

Barriers such as fencing, help protect children but they are not enough. In order to ensure our children's safety, additional barriers such as pool, door & window alarms as well as self-locking and self-latching gates are often necessary. Child anti-drowning alarms can also serve as a barrier.

Classes for water safety are available. Swimming lessons can begin as young as 6 months of age. The American Red Cross offers CPR courses that can be a true lifesaver. See our resource list for contact information on water safety classes, swim and CPR lessons.

Children who wander are at higher risk for drowning. **Project Lifesaver of Palm Beach County** helps families obtain electronic tracking bracelets to speed recovery for a child who wanders. See the resource list for their contact information.



If you have a child with autism spectrum disorder you need to have a Crisis Plan

Be sure to develop a crisis plan before it is needed. For full information about preparing a crisis plan for your special needs child and an "Autism Emergency Contact Form", go to www.autismriskmanagement.com.