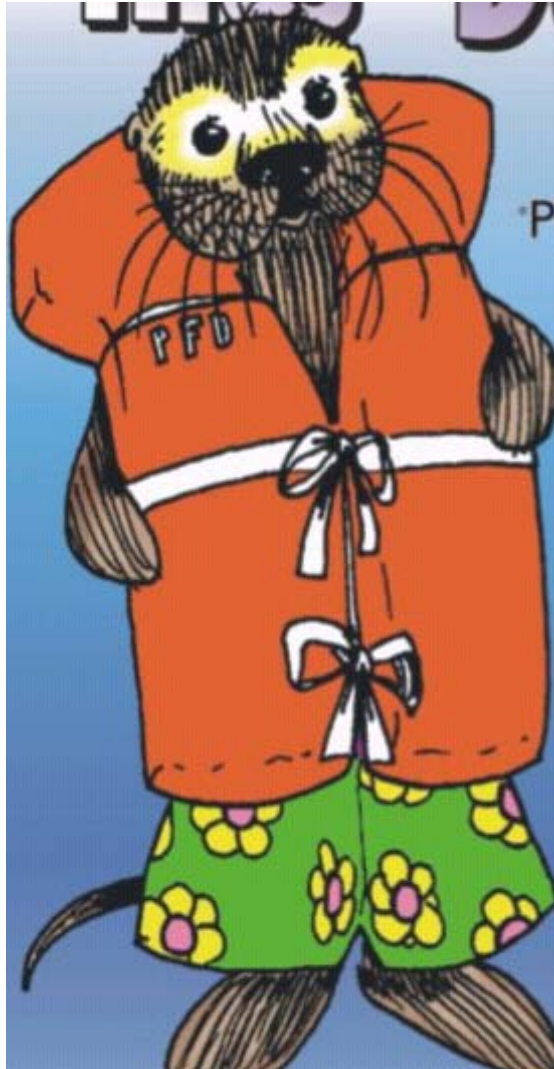


Kids Don't Float Activity Guide



Safe Kids Worldwide



Preventing accidental injury.

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Introduction

The activities in the guide have been developed to teach children ages 8 and 14. The entire program should take about 1-1½ hours to complete with each activity estimated to last 5 to 15 minutes in length. Ideally the activities should reach about 10-25 children at a time, a classroom size is ideal.

The “Key Points to Discuss” follows each activity where you will explain why the game was played, emphasizing the key points outlined. The “Wrap Up” will conclude the entire session and will, again, reiterate the key points and objectives of the KDF educational program.

List of Materials Needed:

- Approximately 15 lifejackets (varying types) for children to be able to try on
- 1 chair for each child (if not available, benches or other seating would be suitable)
- A watch or clock with a second hand
- Masking tape to outline the shape of a boat
- Enough space for the relay race
- 2 adults

Initial Set-Up

Before the activities begin:

- Ensure there are enough chairs/seats for every child.
- For the introductory activity (“Got Lifejacket?”), have lifejackets placed on each chair (or whatever the setting is) before the lesson begins. The total number of lifejackets should be three or four less than the total number of kids participating.
- The “Lifejacket Drill” will require you to create a “boat,” outlining it with masking tape and should be large enough to fit the number of chairs/seats for each child.
- Look up your state’s law regarding lifejacket use for children at the National Transportation Safety Board website:
http://www.nts.gov/recs/mostwanted/M_93_1_chart.pdf

Activities

1. Introduction: “Got a Lifejacket?”

Length: 5 minutes

Objective: Have children learn the importance of having a lifejacket for every person on the boat.

Materials: Approximately 15 lifejackets (have 3 or 4 fewer lifejackets than number of kids)

Procedure: Place lifejackets on the chairs. As children enter the room, or to start the activity, introduce yourself and explain that we will be learning about open water safety and lifejackets. Next, ask them to locate a lifejacket, put it on and sit down again. Remember that three or four children will end up without a lifejacket to wear.

Key Points to Discuss: It is important to know before getting on a boat or dock that there are enough lifejackets for everyone.

2. Group Discussion

Lead a class discussion to encourage children’s engagement.

Length: 5-10 minutes

Objective: To stimulate discussion among the children and informally “survey” them about their boating/open water practices. (This is important to gain a better idea as the educator about what is relevant to the children as it relates to open water safety as well as priming them to learn how to be safer swimmers and boaters).

Procedure: Ask questions such as:

- Where do you like to swim? Who do you go with (your parents, friends, etc.)?
- What type of boats do you ride in? Do you boat a lot?
- Has anyone ever fallen out of a boat, or known someone who did?
- Any scary experiences around the water?
- Who should wear a lifejacket?
- How many lifejackets should be on a boat?
- Ask kids if they know if it’s the law for them to wear a lifejacket while on a boat (the age of mandatory PFD use can be found on the NTSB website).

Lifejacket Laws

3. Proper Lifejacket Fit Demonstration

Explain how to select a lifejacket that will fit properly.

Length: 10 minutes

Objective: To have children learn visually how to put on a lifejacket and know how to perform the proper fit test.

Fit Test

1. Ask for one volunteer and have the child put on a lifejacket.
2. Show how to correctly put on the lifejackets, making sure all the buckles/straps are tied or snapped from the chin down.
3. Show kids the fit test: Have the child raise arms above their head, just like a referee signaling a touchdown. Then, pull up on the shoulders of the lifejacket.
4. If the lifejacket stays in place, it fits. If it touches his/her ears, it's too loose.
5. Now have them turn their head, if it touches their chin, it's too loose.
6. Practice on the same child with different sizes until a proper one is found.

4. Practice with a Partner

Length: 15 minutes

Objective: To have children learn practically and gain confidence in selecting the correct lifejacket and knowing how to properly put it on..

Materials: As many different types of lifejackets as you can collect, placed in a pile.

Procedure: Put children in pairs and have each pair select a lifejacket from the pile. Each pair will have one person put it on correctly and both will stand together to talk about their lifejacket with the group. Going through each pair, the person wearing the lifejacket will show off the lifejacket he or she is wearing. While standing, each pair answers all or a few of the following questions about it:

- How did you put it on?
- What makes this a good lifejacket?
- What do you like about this lifejacket?
- What don't you like about this lifejacket?
- When would you wear this lifejacket?

5. Activity: Life Jacket Drill

Length: 10 minutes

Objective: To demonstrate why it is important that you properly wear a lifejacket at all times.

Materials:

- 1 chair for each child
- Lifejackets for half of the number of children participating
- Masking tape to outline the boat

Procedure

Create masking tape boat. Set up all the chairs in the boat. Divide the group in two halves, instructing one half to select and correctly put on a lifejackets *before* entering the boat, while the other half of the kids will board the boat without one on (but will each have one placed under their chairs within the boat). Announce that there will be a pretend emergency and everyone must exit the boat and have their lifejacket on to do so. After everyone exits, have children sit down while you discuss the key points.

Key Points to Discuss:

Point out that the kids with lifejackets on before getting on the boat were better prepared for the emergency because they already had their lifejackets on. Explain that it only takes one minute for a non-swimmer struggling to stay afloat before drowning. So, it is important to spend one minute putting on the lifejacket before you get into the boat and onto the water than after when a situation arises where you'll need it.

6. Activity: Life Jacket Relay Race

Length: 15 minutes

Objective: For students to practice and gain experience in wearing a lifejacket.

Materials

- 2 lifejackets
- Space for race
- 2 adults (to check the proper wearing of each kids' lifejacket)

Procedure

Divide the children into two equal teams. Have them form two lines. Place a lifejacket at the feet of the first child in each line. At the signal to go, the first child in each line will pick up the lifejacket, put it on properly, and run to the designated place where the adult is standing. The adult will quickly “inspect” the child’s lifejacket, making sure the straps are tied and/or fastened and the lifejacket fits snug.

The child then returns to the starting point, removes the lifejacket and give it to the next person in line. The race is over when the first team to have each person complete the exercise is finished.

Key Points to Discuss

Talk about how difficult it is to put on a lifejacket when you are in a hurry. Emphasize that practice and becoming familiar with the type of lifejacket used will help you to be able to quickly put their lifejacket on correctly when needed. Point out that it is always easier to have the lifejacket on to start with than having to put it on in an emergency, especially if the lifejacket is stored away.

Loaner Stations:

Before the end of the event, tell the children about the lifejacket loaner stations and how they should be used. Also let them know where they are located so that they can share this information with their parents.

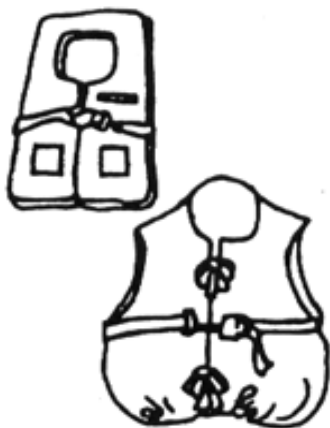
Wrap-up: This will conclude the session. This will be the time to go over each key point and make sure the objectives listed for each activity are met.

Appendix A

Types, Proper Fit and Testing of Lifejackets

The following will provide you with background information on each topic discussed within the “Practice with a Partner” activity.

There are many different types of Lifejackets. These below are U.S. Coast Guard approved and will say on their labels.



TYPE I, also called an OFF-SHORE LIFE JACKET

- Keeps most people afloat by automatically turning them on their back
- Can feel awkward and bulky to wear
- Is not warm enough to offer protection from hypothermia
- Is almost always orange



TYPE II, also called a NEAR-SHORE BUOYANT-VEST, FLOATATION VEST, LIFE VEST, or LIFE JACKET

- Can feel awkward and bulky to wear
- Is not warm enough to offer protection from hypothermia
- Come in a wide range of sizes and many life jackets for children are Type II life jackets
- Comes in orange and other bright colors

TYPE III, also called LIFE VESTS and FLOAT COATS



- Are usually comfortable to wear
- Float coats keep the wearer warmer than life jackets or vests
- Come in a wide range of sizes and many life jackets for children are Type III life jackets
- Come in orange and a wide range of other colors



Type IV such as LIFE RINGS and BUOYANT CUSHIONS


- Are not substitutes for life jackets.
- Should have a line or rope attached to them.
- Come in orange, white and other colors.



(Provide an example of not approved items such as water wings, inner tubes, noodles=none are substitutes for lifejackets.


←Disregard

KIDS DON'T FLOAT: ACTIVITIES
(From AMSEA's Cold Water Kids)



TYPE V HYBRID, an inflatable PFD

- Must be inflated by user, oral.
- Has 2.5 lb. of inherent flotation even when not inflated.
- Has 22 lb. of flotation when inflated.
- Is usually comfortable to wear and work in.
- Comes in many styles and colors.
- Is not approved for use by people weighing less than 90 lb.



IMMERSION SUIT, also called a SURVIVAL SUIT

- Keeps the wearer dry, warm and afloat.
- Has 22 lb. of inherent buoyancy plus additional buoyancy when the air bladder is inflated.
- Designed to prolong the length of time a person can survive in the water.
- Must fit well to work properly.
- Is usually impractical to wear while working or operating a boat because it restricts maneuverability and is very warm.
- Kept on board boats to be quickly donned in emergency situations.
- Usually orange.
- Currently unavailable in sizes to fit children under 44 lb.

←Disregard

Appendix B

Putting on a Lifejacket Correctly

Lifejackets work best when they are correctly fastened. Consult a knowledgeable person if you are unfamiliar with the Lifejackets you are using. Specific guidelines for each of the lifejacket types:

Types I and II:

- Tie or snap all strap, working from the chin down.
- Secure the straps so the lifejacket feels very snug.
- Perform the life jacket fit test: raise arms above the head.
- If the life jacket touches the ears, the jacket needs to be tightened or a smaller size may be better.

Type III:

- Zip all zippers and secure all snaps and straps.
- Snap any waist belts and pull them snug
- Tighten straps on the sides and shoulders so the lifejacket fits securely.
- Put on crotch strap, if appropriate (the tails of adult float coats are difficult to secure in the water.)

Appendix C

Open Water Fact Sheet

Key Facts

- Each year, more than 830 children ages 14 and under die as a result of unintentional drowning.¹
- On average, an annual 3,600 injuries occur to children due to a near-drowning incident.²
- Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional death among children ages 1 to 4 years and children 10 to 14 years.³
- In the summer, between May and August, drowning deaths among children increase 89 percent over the rest of the year.⁴
- Recreational boating accidents caused 11 drowning deaths in 2004; more than half of the children were not wearing personal flotation devices or life jackets.⁵
- It was estimated in 2005 that 426 lives could have been saved if all boaters had worn life jackets.⁶
- Most boating fatalities from 2005 (70 percent) were caused by drowning; the remainder were due to trauma, hypothermia, carbon monoxide poisoning, or other causes.⁷ Open motor boats were involved in 45 percent of all reported incidents, and personal watercraft were involved in another 26 percent.⁸

Who

- As a child increases in age, so does their risk for drowning in open water settings.⁹
- Male children have a drowning rate twice that of female children.¹⁰
- Black children ages 5 to 14 have a drowning rate three times that of their white counterparts.¹¹

Effectiveness of Lifejacket Use

- From 1999 to 2003, it is estimated that 85 percent of boating-related drownings could have been prevented if the victim had been wearing a personal flotation device.¹²
- In 2003, 62 percent of children ages 14 and under who drowned in reported recreational boating accidents were not wearing life jackets.¹³
- Educational efforts focused on lifejackets and safe boating practices are effective in increasing lifejacket usage.¹⁴

Laws and Regulations

- Forty-six states and the District of Columbia require children to wear lifejackets while on board a recreational boat.¹⁵
- In order to find out if your state requires children to wear lifejackets and at what age, go to: http://www.nts.gov/recs/mostwanted/M_93_1_chart.pdf
- Recreational boats must carry one properly-sized, U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifejacket (accessible and in good condition) for each person on board.¹⁶

Suggested Citation: Safe Kids Worldwide (SKW). Drowning and Open Water Injuries, Washington (DC): SKW, 2007.

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- ² National Center for Injury Prevention, WISQARS Nonfatal Injuries: Nonfatal Injury Reports, 2001-2005. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>.
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- ⁴ Safe Kids Worldwide. Child Unintentional Injury Deaths, 2001-2004. Safe Kids U.S. Summer Safety Ranking Report, May 2007.
- ⁵ United States Coast Guard, United States Department of Homeland Security. Boating accident statistics (children): 2004. Personal communiqué: Bruce Schmidt, 2006 April.
- ⁶ U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security (US). Boating Statistics – 2005 [online]. Available from URL: www.uscgboating.org/statistics/Boating_Statistics_2005.pdf.
- ⁷ IBID
- ⁸ IBID
- ⁹ Gilchrist J, Gotsch K, Ryan GW. Nonfatal and Fatal Drownings in Recreational Water Settings—United States, 2001 and 2002. *MMWR* 2004;53(21):447–52.
- ¹⁰ National Center for Health Statistics. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Vital Statistics System. 2000 to 2004 mortality data. Hyattsville (MD): National Center for Health Statistics, 2007.
- ¹¹ National Center for Health Statistics. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Vital Statistics System. 2000 to 2004 mortality data. Hyattsville (MD): National Center for Health Statistics, 2007.
- ¹² National Transportation Safety Board. Recreational Boating Safety: safety study. Washington (DC): NTSB, 1993. NTSB/SS-93/01.
- ¹³ United States Coast Guard, United States Department of Homeland Security. Boating accident statistics (children): 2003. Personal communiqué: Bruce Schmidt, 2005 Feb.
- ¹⁴ Tresser CD, Trusty MN, Yang PP. Personal flotation device usage: do educational efforts have an impact? *J of Public Health Policy* 1997;18(3):346-55.
- ¹⁵ National Transportation Safety Board. “Enhance Recreational Boating Safety,” http://www.nts.gov/recs/mostwanted/rec_boat.html
- ¹⁶ The National Safe Boating Council and the U.S. Coast Guard. 1995 National Safe Boating Campaign: It won't work if you don't wear it!: life jackets save lives. Washington (DC): USCG, 1995.