

# Coalition Best Practices Water Safety

## SAFE KIDS Tarrant County

**Project Contact:** Laurie Smith: 817-810-1664 or lauriesm@cookchildrens.org

SAFE KIDS Tarrant County (TX) has been creating new and innovative water safety outreach programs in their community for many years. During 2003 this coalition was involved in multiple water safety events and activities.

### Life Jacket Exchange

In 1998, Tarrant County SAFE KIDS began its PFD Exchange to deliver water safety messages to the public in a highly visible way. With the emphasis on water safety and education, over 1,700 life jackets have been distributed at these events. Events are held at YMCAs, local public swimming pools and lake marinas. Families come with their children and unsafe items typically used as a flotation device and exchange them for new US Coast Guard-approved life jackets. The children are weighed for an appropriate PFD and the family fills out required paperwork. The families go through stations where they are taught about the importance of supervision and water safety in the home and outside. They are given Water Watcher Tags with tip sheets and one-on-one education about the importance of designating a Water Watcher at social events. Eventually a certified fitter from the U.S Army Corps of Engineers or, Texas Parks and Wildlife or a volunteer from the US Coast Guard Auxiliary teaches the families about proper fit and use of a life jacket. The PFD events are advertised in the local papers and with fliers. Funding for this program has come from the lead organization, Cook Children's Medical Center, as well as Boat U.S., marinas, pool companies and other coalition members.



**Army Corps members fit a toddler for her PFD**



**This logo was created for the Life Jacket Exchange Program and is used on all advertisements for exchange events.**



**This design was created for a water safety t-shirt that was distributed at many of Tarrant County's water safety events.**

## Water Watcher Tags

WWT have proven to be an important component of Tarrant County's water safety outreach. The WWT is a small card on a lanyard with a safety message in English or Spanish designating the holder or wearer of the tag as the person responsible at that time for watching children in the water. The lead organization, Cook Children's Medical Center, funds the tags, as well as a local pool company, the YMCA and a local swim school. Their logos are placed on the tags. The sponsors as well as all coalition members distribute the tags with tip sheets all year long at classes, health fairs and other events.

## Water Safety Brochure

Tarrant County SAFE KIDS Coalition came up with their own colorful water safety brochure, *Rub a Dub Dub, Be Safe in the Tub*. This brochure is one of four that is requested by the community, educators, health professionals and

coalition volunteers to distribute to patients, families and children. They are given out in physician's offices, hospitals, community clinics, health fairs and other events. Members have distributed the brochures in creative ways such as mailboxes at workplaces, attachments to report cards and upon admission to a PTA meeting! The brochure addresses water safety in the tub and home as well as for pools, spas, PFDs, open water sites and swimming in general.

## The Tarrant County SAFE KIDS Water Game Wheel

The water safety game wheel was designed as an educational interactive game to teach water safety to children and adults. The wheel has categories such as Home Safety, In the Pool, At the Lake, The Beach, H2O and more. A book with questions and answers was developed to go with the wheel for ease of use by any volunteer. It contains questions pertaining to the categories with a few hints and answers. The questions are also divided into age groups, so the game can be played by a toddler as well as a teen. Prizes are given for correct answers and, of course, everyone wins! Giveaway items for correct answers are primarily provided by the coalition's lead agency, Cook Children's Medical Center, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. This has proven to be a very popular teaching tool that kids line up for again and again.

## "Waterama"

TCSK partners with the City of Fort Worth Public Health Department to participate in the Fort Worth Water Department's annual "Waterama" event. Over 2000 third graders are bused in for the two-day event. TCSK and CFWPHD worked together to create "Water Jeopardy: How safe is water?" The game follows rules similar to the TV show "Jeopardy!" Students are divided into two teams and answer questions from water-related categories. Instead of dollar amounts, the students play for amounts of water (cup, pint, etc.). The team that collects the most water wins the game.

**REACH AND THROW  
BUT DON'T GO.**

**What to do in an emergency:**

1. Yell for help and get the child safely out of the water.
2. Call 9-1-1 immediately.
3. Check responsiveness of child. Look, listen, and feel for breathing and check pulse. Start rescue breathing or CPR, or both, as appropriate.
4. Monitor child's status. Continue rescue breathing or CPR as needed, until help arrives.

**Remember:** Alcohol and supervision don't mix.

**For more information call:  
(817) 885-4244**

**PULLIAM POOLS** **EMBERS** **Y**

**SAFE KIDS** **COOK CHILDREN'S**  
Coalition led by Medical Center

**Back of  
Tarrant County's  
water watcher tag.**



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## SAFE KIDS Oklahoma

### Wacky Water Wahoo and Wee Water Wahoo

**Project Contact:** Martha Collar: 405-271-5695 or martha-collar@ouhsc.edu

Oklahoma SAFE KIDS developed a series of water safety events including Wacky Water Wahoo and Wee Water Wahoo. They targeted the Healthy Lifestyles Schools that serve mostly inner-city at-risk children with their water safety outreach. Wee Water Wahoo was designed for children enrolled in kindergarten and held at the Aquatic Center at the Oklahoma City Community College. Wacky Water Wahoo was designed for children in grades 2 through 4 and held at White Water Bay, a local water park.

The Oklahoma City School Administration approved the water safety curriculum. Packets were given to each teacher for use in the classroom following the events, and students were given packets with age-appropriate literature and coloring books on water safety. The events had in-water learning stations. Kids progress through several stations, each with a specific water safety lesson. The stations were manned by aquatics specialists from the Red Cross, local fire departments, the college and White Water Bay. Approximately 100-150 volunteers were utilized for each event.

Students were bused into the event locations with funding provided by SAFE KIDS Oklahoma (about \$6,000). Each volunteer was given a "wacky" t-shirt as well as door prizes and lunch. Snacks of juice and cookies were also provided for the children. Approximately 500 kindergartners attended the three-hour morning class. Three thousand elementary-age attendees were divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The total budget for "wacky" programs is about \$10,000. Most funding is covered through corporate donations.



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## SAFE KIDS Alaska

### **Kids Don't Float: A PFD Loaner Program**

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SAFE KIDS Alaska worked with the U.S. Coast Guard of Alaska and other community volunteers to implement the "Kids Don't Float" program statewide in 1996. The program was developed to respond to the high rate of drowning statewide. In the 15 years from 1980 through 1994, 100 children and adolescents (age 0-14) died in Alaska due to drowning. Alaska's drowning rate for children and teenagers is almost two and a half times the national average and significantly higher than that of any other state.

*Kids Don't Float* was initially designed in 1996 by a group in Homer, Alaska, and funded by a mini-grant from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. It was named after a successful program in New York called "Kids Can't Fly," which drastically reduced injuries and deaths due to children falling from open windows. The *Kids Don't Float* program was adapted for statewide use by a coalition formed by the U.S. Coast Guard Seventeenth District Boating Safety Program; State of Alaska, Division of Public Health, Section of Community Health & EMS; and Alaska SAFE KIDS. Representatives of Alaska Health Fairs and the Coast Guard Auxiliary and other community volunteers have provided additional program assistance and input.

The primary component of the *Kids Don't Float* program is a personal flotation device loaner component. Program materials include a *Kids Don't Float* instruction manual, loaner board signs (2x4 ft), and lifejackets. This program is specifically designed to be stand-alone and readily implemented by a wide variety of community groups using the easy-to-follow manual. Sponsors include such groups as the CG Auxiliary, the Boy Scouts, local EMS agencies and fire departments, fraternal organizations, SAFE KIDS coalitions and various other community groups. The *Kids Don't Float* loaner display boards are established at harbors and public boat access areas and have pegs for loaner lifejackets. Boaters may take appropriately sized lifejackets for children who are with them, free of charge. Upon completion of boating activity, boaters return lifejackets to the display/storage board.

## Other Coalition Water Safety Activities

**✓ Please check the following when buying and fitting a life jacket:**

1. Make sure the life jacket has a Coast Guard approved label.
2. Check weight requirements.
3. Make sure the life jacket is comfortable and is snug.
4. Look for special features:
  - a. Head support for younger children. A well-designed jacket will support the child's head in the water.
  - b. A strap between the legs for younger children to help secure the life jacket.
  - c. Comfort and appearance. This is an important feature for teens who are less likely to wear a life jacket.
  - d. To obtain a proper fit, pick up your child by the shoulders of the life jacket. The child's ears and chin should not slip through the life jacket.

**Please Remember:  
A life jacket does not take the place of supervision!**

Thank You to Big 5 Sporting Goods stores for their support of water safety and to the Spokane Regional Health District and the Inland Northwest Drowning Prevention Coalition for developing the coupon program.

For more coupons or water safety information call Children's Hospital Resource Line toll free at 1-866-987-2500, option 4 or visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/dp](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/dp)



**&  
The Washington State Drowning Prevention Network**



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**SAFE  
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**SAFE KIDS Washington State** teamed up with a local sporting goods retailer to offer this discount PFD program.

Below is a picture of one of their PFD loaner boards.



**SAFE KIDS Peninsula (Wash.)** has a slightly different design to their PFD loaner board.

