

# Water Safety

## Tips On Protecting Children

(NAPSA)—Hundreds of young lives may be saved every year, if parents heed a few hints on water safety.

Nearly 350 children younger than 5 drown in swimming pools annually. Most of those water tragedies are preventable. According to Connie Harvey, health and safety expert for the American Red Cross, the best thing anyone can do to be safe in, on and around the water is to learn to swim and be prepared.

The American Red Cross also recommends that nobody ever swim alone, and that applies to adults as well as children.

When dealing with young children, parents should always maintain “reach supervision.” That is, you should always be within arm’s reach of the child, so if anything even begins to happen, you’re there to immediately deal with the problem.

It’s important, Harvey says, for parents to know the difference between toys and safety gear. Water wings and the tubes with the little vests over them can give a false sense of security.

A U.S. Coast Guard-approved plastic life jacket, on the other hand, can save lives. Make certain you have the right size and that you tie it and use all the snaps appropriately. Reach supervision, however, is still necessary.

Harvey recommends that pool owners have an emergency action plan so everybody knows what to



**A few simple precautions can help little ones stay safer and healthier near the water.**

do in the event of an emergency.

One important skill for parents and pool owners is CPR. The Red Cross offers classes. One of the new pieces of equipment you will get at the class is a plastic breathing barrier to put between yourself and the victim. This innovative shield with an air filter that fits over the mouth to minimize the risk of transmitting infectious diseases.

A plastic ring buoy and line are lightweight enough that even a child can save a life by tossing it to the victim who can grab the buoy and be brought back from danger.

For more information on staying safe in, on and around the water, contact your local American Red Cross chapter or visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).