GUIDE YOUR CHILDREN TO
SAFE WATERS

The Virginia Department of Social Services reports that a lack of proper supervision is a leading cause of drowning in children. Understanding the safety steps required to protect your children around any body of water they may encounter, especially during the summer months, is critical.

It takes as little as 20 seconds for a child to drown.

Docks

» Watch for tripping hazards on the dock and do not allow running on docks

» Ensure that old boards are replaced and that there are no nails sticking up from the wood

» Wear life jackets at all times (do not substitute water wings or other floatation devices for life jackets). Ensure that life jackets fit correctly and are up to date

» Consider putting a gate at the front of docks and other forms of safety rails along the dock

» Ensure that there is at least one throwable buoy on each dock

» Know the depth of the water around your dock and do not allow diving from the dock

» Put away all water toys and fishing equipment to prevent children from going to the water alone

Pools

» Children need constant supervision by a safe and sober caretaker while swimming

» Teach your child to swim as early as possible and contact local community agencies for information about lessons

» Swimming pools should be surrounded by a fence

» Children should be wearing U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets while swimming

Beaches 🏝️

» Do not go in the water with an open wound

» Be aware that beaches have litter, sharp glass and other debris, and wear sand socks or water shoes for protection

» Ensure that any child in the water is wearing a life jacket (do not substitute with water wings or other floatation devices), even if they know how to swim

» Be aware of postings and notices regarding algae blooms and water conditions

» Be aware of potential rip tides and teach children what to do if they encounter one

» Ensure that all children are wearing sunscreen, even on cloudy days, and reapply often

» Enroll children in swim lessons as soon as possible

Boats 🚤

» Ensure regular maintenance of boats, especially for electrical and fuel needs

» Turn off portable heaters and other appliances when not on board the boat

» Everyone on the boat should wear life jackets at all times while on and near the boat

» Wear proper footwear at all times to avoid slipping or tripping

» Ensure that children are secure while on board and maintain safe speeds

Visit the resources below for additional information:

» **American Academy of Pediatrics - www.aap.org**

» **Pool Safely - www.poolsafely.gov**

» **Safe Kids Worldwide - www.safekids.org**

» **Virginia Department of Health - www.vdh.virginia.gov**

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

MATHEWS COUNTY
VIRGINIA