

International Water Safety Day Classroom Lesson Plan – Elementary School Ages

Purpose:

To provide water safety and drowning prevention education that equips youth with tools to understand how to behave safely around water and how to react in water emergency and rescue situations.

Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify actions to help be safer in and around bodies of water, including pools, waterparks, oceans, lakes and rivers.
- Explain how following safety rules can prevent accidents in and around water.
- Describe the features of a safe swimming area.
- Describe hazards that make an aquatic area dangerous.
- Explain water safety concepts to others.

Teacher Resources:

- International Water Safety Day Announcement Script
- Do Your Part, Be Water Smart! Celebrating International Water Safety Day Handout (available in digital format)
- International Water Safety Day Stickers
- *Pool Safely* Pledge handouts (also available in digital format)
- Access to Internet for Review of the Water Safety Rules and the *Pool Safely* Pledge

Class Time:

15 minutes

Standards and Performance Indicators:

The Water Safety Education Lesson Plans meet several levels of the CDC National Health Education Standards. As indicated on the website, the NHES are written expectations for what students should know and be able to do by grades 2, 5, 8, and 12 to promote personal, family, and community health. The standards provide a framework for curriculum development and selection, instruction, and student assessment in health education (NHES, 2016).

[Standard 1](#)

Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

[Standard 2](#)

Students will analyze how family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors influence health behaviors.



- [Standard 3](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid information, products, and services to enhance health.
- [Standard 4](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- [Standard 5](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- [Standard 6](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.
- [Standard 7](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.
- [Standard 8](#) Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Lesson Activities:

1. Distribute the "Do Your Part, Be Water Smart! Celebrating International Water Safety Day" handout to students.
2. Relay the following key points:
 - **Today is International Water Safety Day.**
 - **Did you know that drowning is a leading cause of accidental death for children? We're shining a spotlight on this day so you know the basics for keeping yourself, your family and friends safe in and around the water every day.**
 - **Learning to swim is a great way to begin! Swim lessons teach safety and the swimming skills necessary to safely enjoy the water.**
3. Ask students: **Where do you like to go and what do you like to do around the water?**

Answer: Responses may include the following:

- *Home pools*
- *Spas and hot tubs*
- *Pool parties*
- *Waterparks*
- *Lakes and rivers*
- *Oceans*
- *Diving*
- *Boating/Canoeing/Kayaking/Rafting/Tubing*



4. Relay the following key points:
 - **Enjoying the water safely is not just about knowing how to swim. You need to be smart, too.**
 - **We're going to talk about ways you can do that.**

5. Read each safety rule, which is in bold face font. After each rule, facilitate a brief discussion about the rule that draws out the main points in the supporting information.
 - **Swim as a pair near a lifeguard's chair.**
 - Buddy up. Never swim alone.
 - Only swim in places that are protected by lifeguards—or, if at a home pool, only swim when an adult is actively supervising the water.
 - **Look before you leap.**
 - Check the water and weather conditions to be sure that it's a safe place and time to swim.
 - Always enter feet first unless the area is intended for diving.
 - **Follow the rules.**
 - They exist to keep you safe.
 - Always listen to the lifeguards.
 - **Life jackets save lives, so don't just pack it, wear your jacket.**
 - Everyone should wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when on a boat.
 - Anyone who needs a bit more support should wear one when going into the water.
 - **Think, so you don't sink.**
 - Know what to do if you get in trouble in the water.
 - The more skills you have, the better you'll be able to deal with scary situations.
 - **If someone around you gets in trouble, reach or throw, don't go!**
 - Use reaching or throwing equipment to help a struggling person get to safety.
 - Only trained lifeguards with rescue equipment should enter the water to help someone in trouble.

6. Read each scenario below to students. After each scenario, ask students to consider the consequences and share their thoughts about what they think might happen. Then, discuss how the accidents could have been prevented by following the rules.

Scenario 1

Jennifer and Tamika have just come out of the pool locker room and decide to race to the edge of the pool. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but may include the following:

- *They could fall and hurt themselves.*
- *They could fall and hurt others who are in the way.*



Scenario 2

Ian and Justin are playing tag in the water. Ian climbs out and runs to the diving board. Justin quickly follows and jumps in to tag Ian. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but may include the following:

- *Justin could land on Ian and they could both be hurt.*
- *Others swimming in the general area could be hurt.*
- *While running to the diving board, both boys could slip and fall.*

Scenario 3

Jason and some of his friends are taking turns jumping into the water from the side of the pool. Jason gets tired of waiting for his turn, so he pushes a friend into the water. As a result, his friend swallows some water. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but may include the following:

- *His friend could start coughing.*
- *His friend may go back under and swallow more water.*

Scenario 4

Maria and her little brother, José, are getting ready to get into the water. José puts on his arm floats. Maria takes him into water that is over his head. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but may include the following:

- *If José cannot swim well, he could be in a situation beyond his ability.*
- *If José cannot swim well, the arm floats could slip off or lose air, and José could sink.*

Scenario 5

Colin and Shelley are walking along a river, when Shelley decides she wants to go for a swim. She jumps into the river. What might happen?

Answer: Responses will vary but should include the following:

- *She could get caught in the current and carried away.*
- *The current could carry her toward other hazards such as a strainer, dam, or hydraulic.*

7. Optional Summary and Evaluation Exit Ticket: Have students log on to the Kahoot! site to participate in an interactive review of the rules for water safety ([Link](#)).
8. Distribute a *Pool Safely* Pledge and an International Water Safety Day sticker to each student. Have students complete the pledge. Collect the completed pledges.

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9. Optional variation with school/parent approval: Have students' log-in to computers. Have them go to the following site: <https://www.poolsafely.gov/pledge/> and take the Pledge.
10. Relay the following key points to wrap up the lesson:
 - **Knowing how to swim, making smart choices around the water, and knowing what to do if something goes wrong can make a difference between life and death.**
 - **On this International Water Safety Day and throughout the rest of the year, DO YOUR PART, BE WATER SMART!**
 - **Be sure to share what you have learned today with your family and friends to help them become water smart, too.**

Do Your Part, Be Water Smart! Celebrating International Water Safety Day Handout

Download the handout at internationalwatersafetyday.org under Shared Resource, and distribute to participants.

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Do Your Part, Be Water Smart!

 **American Red Cross**

The American Red Cross wants you to learn the basics for keeping yourself, your family and friends safe in and around the water every day.

 <p>It all begins with learning to swim! Swim lessons teach skills you need to enjoy the water safely.</p>	 <p>Swim as a pair near a lifeguard's chair. Never swim alone.</p>	 <p>Look before you leap. Be sure that it's a safe place and time to swim.</p>	 <p>Follow the rules. They help keep you safe. Always listen to the lifeguards.</p>
 <p>Don't just pack it, wear your life jacket. All boaters should wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets. Inexperienced swimmers should wear them in or around water.</p>	 <p>Think, so you don't sink. Know what to do if you get in trouble in the water. Floating or treading can help you think!</p>	 <p>Reach or throw, don't go! Reach or throw an object to help someone in trouble in the water to safety. Never go in the water to try to help.</p>	 <p>Pledge to Pool Safely! Learn the safety steps then take the pledge at poolsafely.gov.</p>

To find out how to sign up for Red Cross swim lessons and to learn more about water safety, visit redcross.org/watersafety.



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