

The Online Parenting Newsletter vol.6 no.7 July, 2005:

KIDS AREN'T WATERPROOF!

Just read a startling statistic. Steven Levitt, a University of Chicago economics professor finds that a child is 100 times more likely to die in a swimming pool accident than be killed by a gun.

No, don't unlock your gun safe or throw out the trigger locks. But don't ignore the dangers of swimming pools, either.

I live in Arizona where drowning is the leading cause of accidental death in children under five. I'm looking at my own swimming pool now; it's sparkling and beautiful, a great place to cool off and exercise.

BUT it is a dangerous place, especially for young children.

Whenever children are playing in a public or home pool, there should always be a "designated watcher" who is doing nothing but watching the children--not grilling chicken or talking to friends. Never leave a child alone near the pool even for a minute. A child can drown in the time it takes to answer the telephone.

Never rely on floaties or other inflatable toys to protect a child from drowning, keep toys like tricycles out of the pool area, and do not permit running near the pool.

Equip pool areas with rescue equipment like a pole and life ring as well as a telephone and learn CPR. In Arizona home pools must be properly fenced and equipped with self-closing, self-latching gates. Parents are advise to not keep any patio furniture or toys nearby that a child might use to climb over the pool fence and to equip all doors from the house with self-closing, self-latching mechanisms.

You may live in a place where home pools are uncommon. But the dangers of water lurk in places many parents don't think of. Never leave a child alone near ANY body of water -- ocean, lake, pond, drainage ditch, wading pool, bathtub, even a bucket!

Have a cool, happy, and SAFE summer!