



YMCA Learn-to-Swim & Water Safety Programs

A Collaborative Partnership with Louisa, Albemarle, Greene County Public Schools and Charlottesville City Schools for 2nd and 5th Grade Students

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Why Learn-to-Swim

Too many communities have been touched by the tragedy of losing a child well before their time and those deaths are preventable. Swimming satisfies the physical education needs of a school while also providing life-saving skills. No other school sport offers that combination.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Drowning is the **second leading cause of death** in the U.S. for children between the ages of 1 and 14.
- Of the approximately 750 children who will drown next year, about 275 of them will do so **within 25 yards of a parent or other adult** having no idea it is happening.
- **70% of African American children and 58% of Hispanic children** have low or no swim ability, compared to 40% of Caucasian children, putting them at a higher risk for drowning.

Academic and Social Skills

- Regular physical activity in childhood **reduces anxiety and stress** and **increases self-esteem**.
- **Inactive kids score up to 40% lower** on achievement tests than their active friends.

Purpose

To ensure every child learns life-saving swimming and water safety skills that will help them not only to grow up safely around water, but also to thrive outside of it.

People

In order to most effectively leverage each of the six constituents below, there are key considerations and best practices to have the greatest impact.

YMCA	Challenges: overall funding strategy and competing priorities. Solutions: partnerships with Superintendents and other community partners alleviate costs and increase community building.	Aquatics Director Challenges: scheduling of pool time, staffing, and competing priorities. Solutions: community outreach and program implementation in partnership with principals, teachers, volunteers, and parents.	Instructors Challenges: attracting and retaining the best instructors. Solutions: hire instructors who are representative of the community. Leverage passionate, experienced volunteers.
	Superintendent Challenges: meeting the mission of academic success. Competing priorities and interest groups. Solution: incorporate learn-to-swim as part of PE curriculum and develop MOU with YMCA to deliver program.	Teachers Challenges: limited curriculum time, state testing requirements, reduced classroom time. Solutions: clear expectations and scheduling information. Testimonials from current programs.	Students Challenges: large range of abilities, fear bias. Solutions: develop a detailed plan for streamlining the intake and output in the pool. Establish rules prior to the first lesson. Consider providing suits and towels. Celebrate accomplishments.

2nd Grade Learn-to-Swim

The second grade learn-to-swim program is a five-week program. Students receive five 45-minute swimming lessons.

Curriculum

In the YMCA Safety Around Water program for school-age children, swimmers become comfortable and confident in the water through practicing safe water habits, engaging in underwater exploration, and learning how to swim to safety if they fall into a body of water.

Student's progress through the following stages:

Stage 1	Water Acclimation	Students develop comfort with underwater exploration and learn to safely exit in the event of falling into a body of water.
Stage 2	Water Movement	Students focus on body position and control, directional change, and forward movement in the water while also continuing to practice how to safely exit in the event of falling into a body of water.
Stage 3	Water Stamina	Students learn how to swim to safety from a longer distance. This stage also introduces rhythmic breathing and integrated arm and leg action.

Daily Schedule

Group 1 & 2

9:30 | Arrival (in suits)

9:45-10:30 | Group 1 – Swim Lesson, Group 2 – Gym Time

10:30-11:15 | Group 1 – Gym Time, Group 2 – Swim Lesson

11:15-12:00 | Change/Lunch/Depart

Group 3 & 4

11:00 | Arrival (in suits)

11:15-11:45 | Lunch

11:45-12:30 | Group 3 – Swim Lesson, Group 4 – Gym Time

12:30-1:15 | Group 3 – Gym Time, Group 4 – Swim Lesson

1:15-1:45 | Change/Depart

5th Grade Water Safety

The fifth-grade water safety program is a one-day program. Students receive five 15-minute water safety stations, lunch and a 1 hour free swim.

Curriculum

In the YMCA Water Safety program, children learn essential water safety skills to build confidence and awareness in aquatic environments. They practice safe water habits, explore underwater safety techniques, and develop the ability to reach safety if they find themselves in an unexpected water situation. These skills help prepare children for real-life scenarios while fostering a lifelong respect for the water.

Water Safety Stations:

Station 1	Water Acclimation	Students build comfort with underwater exploration and learn safe exit strategies
Station 2	Life Jacket Safety	Students learn the proper way to wear and use a life jacket, ensuring they understand its role in water safety.
Station 3	Open Water/ Boating Safety	Students discuss essential safety measures for open water environments and emergencies involving watercraft.
Station 4	Reach or Throw, Don't Go	Students practice crucial water safety techniques to assist others in an emergency while keeping themselves safe.
Station 5	Swim Assessments	Students participate in the YMCA recreational swim test to assess their swimming ability.

Daily Schedule

9:30 | Arrival (in suits)

9:30-10:00 | Rules and Safety Talk

10:00-10:15 | Rotation 1

10:15-10:30 | Rotation 2

10:30-10:45 | Rotation 3

10:45-11:00 | Rotation 4

11:00-11:15 | Rotation 5

11:30-12:00 | Lunch

12:15-1:15 | Free Swim

1:15-2:00 | Change/Depart