

# Autism Drowning Prevention



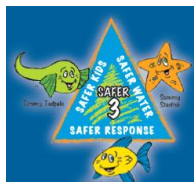
Children and adults with autism tend to have three characteristics, which when combined, can be very dangerous: a tendency to wander, no inherent sense of danger, and a fascination with water. Autism-related wandering is not uncommon, and many of these children go straight to nearby water. Here are a few water safety tips.

- Teach your child to swim.
- Know the location of all bodies of water including pools, ponds, lakes, creeks, fountains, spillways and streams in your area.
- Alarms should be installed on doors and windows to notify the family if a child has left the house.
- Families should consider printing flyers to educate their neighbors (especially those who live near the water) on their child's tendencies to wander and how to contact them quickly.
- If a child or adult with autism is missing, immediately dispatch searchers to nearby water.
- Barriers around pools such as fences should be maintained at all times.
- Parents and caregivers should be trained in CPR and basic lifesaving skills.
- New GPS tracking devices maybe helpful in reducing search times.
- Do not assume your child will not be attracted to bodies of water if they have not been so in the past.
- Realize that drowning is silent.

## Most wandering events occur

- During warmer months
- During Holiday events such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor day and other warm-climate holidays.
- During family gatherings or outside activities such as camping or hiking.
- Visits to non-home settings, such as a friend's house or vacation setting.
- When adjustments have been made at home to accommodate warmer weather, especially window screens and doors.
- During times of stress or an escalation of behaviors which may cause a child/adult to flee.

For Additional Drowning Prevention Information Please Visit:



**SAFER<sup>3</sup> WATER SAFETY**  
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*Educate to Eliminate Drowning.*  
[www.safer3.org](http://www.safer3.org)

