



News Release

**Sunrise Fire-Rescue
Department**

(954) 746-3400

www.sunrisefl.gov

For Release: IMMEDIATE

Water Safety and Your Family

Spring has arrived, and folks throughout South Florida will be heading to the nearest pools and beaches to cool off. Water activities offer endless opportunities for fun and fitness, but lack of supervision and safety precautions can lead to tragedy.

Drowning is the leading cause of death in children ages 1 - 4 years old in Broward County, according to the Florida Department of Health. However, Sunrise Fire Rescue Chief Thomas DiBernardo said, "The risk of drowning is significantly reduced if we use multiple layers of protection."

These layers of protection should always include the following:

- **Supervision** - Always have a designated "Water Watcher" when children are swimming. This needs to be a responsible adult whose undivided attention is on those in and around the water. Children must be taught from an early age never to go near the water without an adult.
- **Barriers** – Use child-proof locks on all doors, door alarms, pool fences, and self-closing and self-latching gates.
- **Swimming and Water Safety Lessons** – Even the youngest children can learn skills to help them to be safer in and around the water. Caregivers should learn to swim as well.
- **Preparation** - Learn CPR and keep proper safety gear, including a phone, life-vests, hook, & ring buoy, near the pool. If your child is missing, always check the pool first.

Be sure to enroll your child in swim lessons as soon as possible. April through October, the City of Sunrise offers one session of eight swim lessons per year *free of charge* to Sunrise residents. These group lessons are for children 3 – 12 years of age.

Vouchers for swim lessons are also available for children four years of age and under, funded by the Children's Services Council and available through the Broward County's SWIM Central program. These \$40 vouchers can be applied to the already low-cost swim lessons offered through the City of Sunrise. Children as young as 10 months can begin lessons through the Parent and Tot classes; private lessons are available at 18 months and up. Vouchers may be requested by calling 954-357-7946 (SWIM) or by email at swimcentral@broward.org.

For more information on swim lessons, visit the City of Sunrise website at www.sunrisefl.gov. You can also go to www.watersmartbroward.org to find additional water safety tips and swimming lesson

providers throughout Broward County.

Finally, please remember that while lessons and instruction are a great start, there is no substitute for active adult supervision, *especially* for children four years old and under.

To see health and safety updates from Sunrise Fire Rescue, 'Like' us on Facebook at Sunrise-Rescue, and follow us on Twitter@SunriseFRD.