

A Publication of the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County

Safe & Healthy

Kids Matter



Water Safety

Safe Sleep

**Coping
with
Crying**

**Safe
Caregivers**

JWBPinellas.org

Juvenile Welfare Board



Pinellas County

The Juvenile Welfare Board
of Pinellas County believes

All Kids Matter...

...and we want all children to be **SAFE AND HEALTHY**,
and their families to be **STRONG**.

Tampa Bay 

2-1-1TM

Get Connected. Get Answers.

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc.

Parenting is one of the toughest but most rewarding things you'll ever do. Knowing where to get answers, information and tips about parenting and child safety is important.

In Pinellas County, 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares has trained people ready to help you - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Anytime day or night, you can reach out for answers or help for yourself, family member or friend.

Remember "2-1-1" to get connected and get answers!

CALL

CALL 2-1-1

Talk with a
caring professional
24 hours a day.

SEARCH

211CONNECTS.ORG

Click "Clients"
& then "Need Help?" to
search our database
for referrals
24 hours a day.

EMAIL

INFO@211TAMPABAY.ORG

Email one
of our
professionals
24 hours a day.

CHAT

211CONNECTS.ORG

Chat live
with
one of our
professionals
(limited hours).

Juvenile Welfare Board



Pinellas County

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About the Juvenile Welfare Board

The Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) is a publicly funded, mission-driven organization that is all about children and families in Pinellas County and believes *all kids matter*. We improve their lives through programs, partnerships and advocacy that ultimately benefit the whole community.

JWB was created in 1945 by the citizens of Pinellas County who were the first in the nation to collectively say *all children matter* by investing tax dollars to improve their futures.

JWB responsibly invests in programs with proven results and creates innovative partnerships that benefit tens of thousands of children and families each year. Our efforts also strengthen neighborhoods, communities and schools, making this a better place for everyone to live.

JWB is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors and has identified three areas of focus: *School Readiness*; *School Success*; and *the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect*.

All Kids Matter

Too many times we hear of yet another death or serious injury to a child that could have been prevented. Whether it's the drowning of a small child who wandered into a swimming pool or pond; an infant who died of heatstroke after being left alone in a hot car; a parent who accidentally rolled over in bed and suffocated their child due to co-sleeping; or a frustrated parent who shook their baby in an attempt to make them stop crying. It only takes seconds for these tragedies to happen, yet the end results are permanent and life-changing.

Did you know that drowning is the number one cause of death for children under 5 in Florida? That children who co-sleep or "bed share" with their parents are 40% more likely to die from suffocation? That over half of all children with Shaken Baby Syndrome die?

And did you know that, in most cases, these tragedies could have been prevented?

Whether you're an expecting, new or experienced parent; the grandparent or relative of a small child; or the partner, friend or neighbor of someone with children. We can all do our part by paying a little more attention to child safety information, tips and resources.

The Juvenile Welfare Board is committed to the safety and well-being of all children, so we gathered some of the area's finest child safety experts and compiled practical tips and information into this booklet. Please take time to read and share with family and friends.



Together, we can help keep Pinellas County's children safe, healthy and well. Because *all kids matter!*

Sincerely,
Dr. Marcie A. Biddleman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcie A. Biddleman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

• Water Safety Matters •



Drowning is a silent catastrophe and the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 5 in Florida. In fact, Florida loses more children under the age 5 to accidental drowning than any other state in the nation. And while bathtubs, beaches and any body of water pose a danger, about 8 out of every 10 child drowning deaths occur in home swimming pools.

It was in a backyard pool that Jenna DeVito-Roisum lost her 2-year old son, Mason, to a drowning accident in 2009. He was in the pool less than five minutes and there were no sounds of splashing or shouting to alert anyone to what was happening.

“We thought we were good parents; that we really paid attention. So, how could something like this happen to us?” thought Jenna. “We thought that, God forbid, if anything happened, we’d surely hear something. We’d hear him yell or splash or something.”

But they didn’t, and in a split moment, Mason was gone.

In the midst of the pain and shock of losing her son, Jenna decided that she would do whatever she could to keep this from happening to other families. Today, Jenna gives swim lessons and has started a foundation called Mason’s Gift to help raise awareness and spread education about water safety.

And she teaches children that even if they know how to swim, they still need adult supervision. “Swimming is just another layer of protection, but it does not replace vigilant supervision from an adult,” Jenna added.

Jenna and many water safety advocates stress that there is no such thing as being 100% safe around water. But there are layers of protection that can make water safer for children. First and foremost is supervision.

LAYER ONE: SUPERVISION

Drowning is silent; it occurs quickly and quietly and can happen in the few minutes it takes to answer a phone call or run inside to grab a towel. Supervision, the first and most crucial layer of protection, means someone is always actively watching when a child is in the pool.

Regardless of how well your child swims, there is no substitution for supervision. At pool parties or backyard barbecues – and even with several adults nearby – it’s not safe to assume that children are being watched. Make sure someone is assigned the role of “water watcher” and does nothing else but focus on the children at all times.

Supervisors of preschool children should provide “touch supervision,” keeping them in arm’s reach at all times and not relying on inflatable arm bands (water wings), as these can come off of a child’s arms.

*Drowning is a silent catastrophe.
Protect yourself and your family by
knowing the layers of protection.*

Adult supervision inside the house is also important. It’s easy for a parent or caregiver to get distracted with chores around the house. A backyard door may be left open, leaving an opportunity for a small child to wander outside and easily gain access to the pool. That’s why barriers are another important layer of protection.

LAYER TWO: BARRIERS

Although there is no substitute for supervision, barriers add another layer of protection by physically blocking a child’s access to the pool or alerting parents when a child opens an outside door. Barriers include child-proof locks on exterior doors; pool fences with self-latching and self-closing gates; and door and pool alarms. Professionally-approved pool and spa covers may also be used.

Children seem drawn to water, but this desire means pool owners have a responsibility to safeguard their pools – even if they don’t have children of their own. Florida’s Residential Pool Safety Act requires one of the following safety measures for pools built after October 1, 2001:

- Pool fence with self-closing, self-latching gate.
- Approved pool cover.
- Alarms on all doors and windows leading out to the pool.
- Self-closing, self-latching devices with a release mechanism no lower than 54” above the floor for all doors with pool access.



Unfortunately, the vast majority of Florida's residential swimming pools were built prior to the Act and are not required to comply; but, the law does provide basic guidelines to help pool owners make their pools safer. The Florida Safe Pools website also offers free in-home pool safety checks plus an interactive pool safety guideline page: FloridaSafePools.org.

Remember, children are good climbers and very curious. Remove furniture near the outside pool barrier, keep toys and other floating objects out of the pool, and remove pool ladders when not in use.

LAYER THREE: PREPAREDNESS

Regardless of whether you have your own pool, swim and water safety lessons are a preparation measure that gives children the knowledge and skills to make them safer around water.

Local YMCAs will test your child's swim skills for free and offer a variety of swim safety programs. In addition, many city recreation centers offer swim safety programs.

Swim and water safety lessons make the water safer for children – but not 100% safe. Infant/child CPR is the final layer of preparation because in a drowning situation, seconds matter. A submerged child can lose consciousness in less than two minutes and sustain permanent brain damage in less than six minutes. For every child who drowns, five more receive emergency medical care for water submersion and, the longer they go without breathing, the more severe their injuries can be.



Whenever a child is missing, check swimming pools, bathtubs or nearby bodies of water immediately and keep a phone with you or near the pool to call 9-1-1 quickly if necessary. Being prepared for an emergency can mean the difference between a close call and permanent injury – or even death.

WATER SAFETY MATTERS FOR EVERYONE

Incorporating these layers of protection into our everyday lives is a responsibility for every parent, relative, caregiver and pool owner. Water safety matters for everyone. Jenna DeVito-Roisum has dedicated herself to making sure everyone knows it. "I'm doing this because I don't want any other family to have to feel this pain. I owe it to Mason."

Call 2-1-1 for water safety courses and swim lessons for your child near your home. Or visit 211tampabay.org and search "swimming lessons."



WATER SAFETY TIPS

Supervision

- Supervise children at all times around bodies of water, including bathtubs. Any body of water poses a potential hazard.
- Avoid distractions that may interfere with supervision. Leaving a child alone, even for a few seconds, is all it takes.
- Designate "water watchers" for backyard gatherings so someone is always responsible for supervising children around the pool.

Barriers

- Outside your home, put up barriers like pool fences with self-closing, self-latching gates, approved pool/spa covers, or pool wave alarms.
- Remove ladders and floating objects from the pool.
- Inside your home, install door and window alarms or self-closing, self-latching devices with a release mechanism no lower than 54" above the floor for doors with access to the pool.

Preparedness

- Prepare children early with water survival courses and swim lessons.
- Learn CPR and be prepared for emergencies.



• Safe Sleep Matters •

Every parent or caregiver of a newborn has many questions and concerns when they bring the baby home for the first time. From feeding, to soothing, to sleep: the needs of every newborn are unique. One key area that every parent or caregiver should prepare for in advance is establishing safe sleep arrangements for the baby.

In Florida, the leading cause of injury-related deaths for babies under age one is suffocation and strangulation in an adult bed. Unsafe sleep conditions for babies, such as co-sleeping or bed-sharing, increase the chance for SIDS, a sudden and unexplained death of an infant. SIDS is the leading cause of death for infants between one month and 12 months of age. Fortunately, proactive measures can help prevent SIDS by following well-documented and sound advice.

There are a few simple, easy-to-follow guidelines when providing a safe sleeping environment for a baby:

- Place your baby on his or her back to sleep. Remember, “BACK TO SLEEP.”
- NEVER let your baby sleep in bed with you or your spouse or partner.
- NEVER let a baby sleep on an air mattress, bean bag, sofa or waterbed.
- A bassinet, crib or play yard with a firm mattress and tight fitting sheet is the safest environment for your baby to sleep. Remove ALL blankets, stuffed animals, toys, bumper pads or other bedding, as these present serious risks to your sleeping baby.



CO-SLEEPING DANGERS

Did you know that caregivers who sleep with their baby increase the chance of baby SIDS by 40%? SIDS or “sudden infant death syndrome” is the sudden death of an infant that is not predicted by medical history and remains unexplained after a thorough forensic autopsy. Infants are at the highest risk for SIDS during sleep.

Experts agree that the safest option for parents or caregivers of babies six months old and younger is to place the baby’s crib or bassinet *next* to your bed. This way, you can place your baby on its back in the crib and you can *safely* monitor them during the first few months. It can be difficult given parents are likely as tired – if not more so – than the baby. However, you should *always* return your baby to their crib or bassinet when you’re ready to go back to sleep.

Remember your ABC’s:

The best way for your baby to sleep is ALONE on his or her BACK in a CRIB.

MAKING YOUR BABY'S SLEEP ENVIRONMENT SAFE

To ensure your baby's sleep environment is safe, parents and caregivers should also check that all bedding materials meet current Consumer Products Safety Commission standards by contacting cpsc.gov or (800) 638-2772. This free site allows you to check if the products you use are safe for your baby. When choosing and constructing your baby's crib, keep these tips in mind:

- Make sure the slats are no more than 2 3/8" apart (width of a soda can).
- The mattress should be the same size as the crib with no gaps, so your baby's arms, legs or body can't get trapped.
- If any materials are broken or missing from the original packaging, call the manufacturer. Using replacement parts not provided by the manufacturer could negatively impact the structural stability of the crib.
- Make sure the crib does not have any decorative cutouts in the headboard or footboard, as they can pose a risk to trap hands and arms.

In addition, be sure to keep the nursery room temperature at a comfortable level – one in which an adult in a t-shirt would find acceptable. You can also use a wearable blanket or a one-piece zip-up sleeper that provides warmth and coverage without posing a SIDS risk to the baby.

Also, never allow smoking in your baby's sleep environment; this can be harmful to the baby's lung functions and can also increase the risk of SIDS.

SLEEP-RELATED QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE

Is it safe to put a baby to sleep in a car seat or stroller?

No, because of the way the baby is positioned in these carriers. Babies should always be placed on their back to sleep.

Can I swaddle my baby? Yes, but be sure to use a light receiving blanket. Once babies reach five to six months, swaddling is no longer needed, and parents can simply put their baby to sleep wearing a onesie, sleeper or wearable blanket.

What if I'm breastfeeding? Breastfeeding is encouraged. A mom should place her baby in a crib or bassinet after nursing.

What if my baby likes sleeping on his stomach? The safest way for babies to sleep is on their backs. When babies sleep on their stomachs or sides, they can choke or suffocate.

My baby has trouble breathing – what's the best way to put my baby to sleep? If your baby has a medical condition, talk to your doctor about any special care they may need.



SAFE SLEEP TIPS

- The best way for your baby to sleep is ALONE on his or her BACK in a CRIB.
- Lay your baby down in a crib or bassinet, placing baby on his or her back to sleep every night and for naps.
- Never let your baby sleep in bed with you and your spouse or partner. Remember, it's OK to share a room – but not a bed.
- Use a firm mattress and tightly fitted sheet.
- Never let your baby sleep on an air mattress, bean bag, sofa or waterbed.
- Make sure your baby's crib or bassinet is free of blankets, toys and other bedding.
- Keep the sleep area away from all loose objects such as electrical cords or blinds. It's OK to hang a mobile, but be sure it's out of the baby's reach and remove it once they learn to sit up.
- Lower the crib's mattress once they learn to sit up and again once they learn to stand.
- Do not allow smoking around your baby; this can negatively impact the baby's lung functioning.



• Coping with Crying Matters •



“One would think that it could never happen to someone who wore scrubs, worked in a hospital, and taught parents how to care for their babies and keep them safe,” shared Susan Martin-Warren. But it did.

In 2005, Susan was working one evening for the Healthy Families program in Hillsborough County. Her husband was home caring for their two young children: 3-year-old Carter and 3-month-old Graham.

“The night Graham was shaken, he exhibited symptoms common to Shaken Baby Syndrome. His father, while I was working, lost his ability to cope. As it was related to me, Graham went limp and turned white; he was non-responsive and unconscious.”

Shaken Baby Syndrome can happen in a split second when a parent or caregiver loses control and shakes a baby in an attempt to stop their crying. The baby’s head is heavy and their neck muscles are weak. Shaking makes the brain rotate back and forth inside the baby’s skull, shearing the fragile blood vessels and nerves and causing the brain tissue to tear. This violent act can lead to permanent brain damage, paralysis, bleeding of the brain, blindness, seizures and even death.

Abusive head trauma, or Shaken Baby Syndrome can happen to anyone. It happens in seconds but its consequences are lifelong.

“We were sent home from the hospital and told to expect the worst but hope for the best.”

Graham survived, but many in his situation do not. Over half of all infants and toddlers diagnosed with acute head trauma, or Shaken Baby Syndrome, die. Graham was fortunate in that he survived, but he lives with lifelong consequences. He has permanent damage to one hemisphere of his brain, impacting his gross and fine motor skills and vision. He’s considered “special needs” and struggles with short-term memory loss. In his short nine years of life, he’s had four brain surgeries and countless medical appointments – and he lives with a permanent shunt to drain the fluid that builds up around his brain.

Stress and frustration that can lead someone to shake a baby can happen to anyone. That’s Susan’s message, and she travels the country to share her story and educate professionals, parents and caregivers on ways to keep babies safe and cope with crying.



COPING WITH CRYING

Non-stop crying is difficult and a challenge for all parents.

Did you know...?

- Babies cry for many reasons; they cry an average of 2-3 hours a day and sometimes more often.
- Crying happens most often in the evenings.
- Crying may start and stop for no apparent reason.
- Crying may not stop no matter what you do.
- A baby's crying will not hurt him or her.
- Crying is normal!

Crying is completely normal, and yet it is the number one reason or trigger for frustration that may lead someone to shake a baby. The most important thing to remember is that the goal *isn't* to get the baby to stop crying. The goal is to calm or soothe them.

Babies cry for many reasons and crying is normal. Remember, the goal isn't to get the baby to stop crying – the goal is to calm or soothe them.

If you're feeling stressed as a parent or caregiver, you're not alone. It's important to understand what triggers your frustration and know your limits. Plan ahead by establishing tiers of support – trusted friends, family members and neighbors who can provide different levels of help. Some you can trust to watch your baby when you need a time-out. Others are good listeners and will be there anytime, day or night, for support by phone.



Never try soothing a baby when you're frustrated. Know your limits, plan ahead and ask for help when needed.



COPING WITH CRYING TIPS

CHECK THE BABY'S BASIC NEEDS

- Is the baby hungry or is the diaper dirty?
- Is the baby too hot or cold?
- Is the baby ill, running a fever or teething?
- Is the baby overstimulated or overtired?

SOOTHE THE BABY

- Swaddle, cuddle, rock or sway the baby.
- Hold the baby close while walking or swaying.
- Gently massage the baby's back, chest or tummy.
- Make a "SHHH" sound to mimic the womb.
- Sing, hum or talk in a soothing voice.
- Play soft music or dim the lights.
- Offer a pacifier.
- Take the baby for a walk in a stroller, ride in a car seat or place in a swing.

COPE WITH FRUSTRATION

- Take time to regroup. Place the baby on his or her back in a safe place, like in a crib, and walk away.
- Sit down, close your eyes and take several deep breaths.
- Call those on your support plan; ask them to come by to give you a break or simply talk with you over the phone.
- If you can't reach someone you know by phone, call (800) FLA-LOVE for anonymous support.
- Check on the baby every 5 to 10 minutes to make sure they're alright while you take a time-out or seek support.





Safe Caregivers Matter

While it's important to know tips about water safety, safe sleep and coping with crying, it's equally important to know who's watching your child. Know the background and parenting skills of family members, friends, boyfriends, girlfriends or caregivers before leaving them alone with your child.

Did you know that children who live with adults not related to them are nearly 50 times as likely to die of inflicted injuries?

Spend time observing the person with your child before you leave them alone together and ask yourself:

DOES YOUR PARTNER/FRIEND/CAREGIVER:

- Treat other people with respect?
- Get angry or impatient when your child cries, gets fussy or throws a tantrum?
- Call you child bad names, ridicule your child or talk badly about him or her?
- Think it's funny to scare your child?
- Expect your child to do things that aren't realistic for his or her age?
- Get angry or stressed easily?
- Drink alcohol in excess or use drugs around your child?

For more information call 2-1-1 or visit HealthyFamiliesFLA.org or MyFLFamilies.com/WhosWatching.



INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

PINELLAS COUNTY

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares
211tampabay.org
Call 2-1-1

All Children's Hospital/FL Suncoast Safe Kids Coalition
allkids.org/safekids

Directions for Living
directionsforliving.org

FL Dept. of Health in Pinellas County
pinellashealth.com

Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services
gulfcoastjewishfamilyandcommunityservices.org

Healthy Start Coalition of Pinellas, Inc.
healthystartpinellas.org

PEMHS, Inc.
pemhs.org

Suncoast Center, Inc.
suncoastcenter.com

The Children's Home
childrenshome.org

YMCA of Greater St. Petersburg
stpeteymca.org

YMCA of the Suncoast
ymcasuncoast.org

STATE

FL Dept. of Children & Families
MyFLFamilies.com

FL Dept. of Health
floridahealth.gov

FL Safe Pools
FloridaSafePools.org

Healthy Families FL
HealthyFamiliesFLA.org
Call (800) FLA-LOVE (352-5683)

Ounce of Prevention Fund of FL
ounce.org

WaterProof FL
WaterProofFL.org

NATIONAL

American Academy of Pediatrics
aap.org

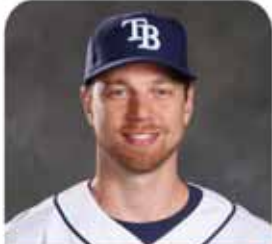
Center for Disease Control
CDC.gov

Prevent Child Abuse America
preventchildabuse.org

Consumer Products Safety Commission
cpsc.gov
Call (800) 638-2772



BE WATER SMART FROM THE START



BEN ZOBRIST
SPOKESPERSON

As a leader in drowning prevention, the YMCAs of Tampa Bay are teaming up with the Rays to remind you to be water smart from the start. The Y offers a variety of swim safety programs for both children and adults. It's never too late to save a life.

REGISTER FOR SWIM CLASSES TODAY!

Visit ymcatampabay.org to register your child!

Scholarship assistance available.



In partnership with:



Looking Out For Your Kids' Safety Year-Round

- Water Safety
- Child Passenger and Occupant Protection Safety
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety
- Medication Safety and Poison Prevention
- Fire, Burns and Scalds Prevention

www.allkids.org/safekids





The Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County would like to thank these organizations for their child safety expertise and contributions to this publication.

Their staff work tirelessly to provide education, training and services designed to keep kids safe and healthy.



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CHILD SAFETY TIP

When you're walking through a parking lot, look into parked cars – especially in the back seat – to see if a child's been left in a hot car. This simple act of paying attention can save a child's life!