

May 27, 2016

CHDP Providers:

This summer, across the state, families will take time to appreciate the beauty and joy of California's waterways and recreation opportunities. This also makes spring & summer a good time to educate families that drowning and near-drowning incidents are preventable!

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has recently updated the Drowning Prevention Webpage at <http://www.dds.ca.gov/Drowning/Index.cfm> and there are links to excellent drowning prevention education materials. It is unfortunate that DDS continues to see new children each year with near-drowning as a risk-factor, as a part of their client data. Additionally, the most current statistics from the California Department of Public Health informed us that 60 children ages five and under died in 2013 due to a drowning in pools and other water systems. This is more than one new child per week (per year) statewide that was lost due to drowning. The survivors of near-drowning accidents have continued to increase the number of children living with severe disabilities for the remainder of their lives. In 2015, DDS enrolled 47 new cases of children with a near drowning accident. This is one of the few developmental disabilities that is 100% preventable.

Please remind families served by your programs to take steps to prevent a devastating incident from happening.

Drowning Prevention is most effective with a "layers of protection" approach:

- Never leave a child alone near water, even for a few seconds
- A supervising adult should be close enough to touch the child under 4 years old near water
- Keep a constant adult eye on young children
- All collections of water are dangerous for infants and toddlers including bathtubs, buckets, toilets, ponds, spas, swimming pools, and natural water sites
- Swimming pools should have fences, alarms, and drains that meet regulations
- Pool gates should be self-latching, opening outward, with the latch out-of-reach for a child
- Keep reaching and throwing aids near a swimming pool
- All children should wear a personal flotation device while playing near bodies of water
- Parents and child caregivers should know how to perform rescue techniques and strategies to respond in an emergency
- If a child is missing, check the pool first

Governor Brown's Drowning Prevention message is posted as well as posters in English and Spanish for reproduction.

Water in California is precious and so are California's children. Thank you for taking a part in Drowning Prevention this year!