



To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Directors of Nonpublic Schools

Route to: Principals, School Nurses, Staff Involved with Community Outreach, Students, Guardians and Parents

From: Christine Norbut Beyer, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Date: June 21, 2023

Dear colleague,

Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death for children between the ages of 1 to 4 and the second leading cause of death or unintentional injury for children younger than 14.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), close to 4,000 fatal, unintentional drownings occur every year in the U.S., with over 8,000 incidents of non-fatal drownings reported. [Data](#) show that the greatest percentage of drownings for children under age 1 occurred in bathtubs. For children between the ages of 1 to 13, the largest number of incidents occurred in swimming pools, and for youth ages 14 to 17, drownings occurred more frequently in other natural bodies of water such as rivers, lakes, and oceans.

Last year, approximately fourteen drownings occurred in New Jersey between the months of April and June. As we head into the summer season, the potential for child drownings begins to increase as families venture out to attend pool parties, go camping and take daytrips down the shore, or go swimming in bodies of water that are unfamiliar, that may or may not have lifeguards present, and that can quickly become difficult to navigate even for an experienced swimmer.

Regardless of their age or the body of water, children and youth should be supervised at all times, even in the shallowest water.

As partners in serving children and families, we are asking for your help to raise awareness about water safety. Let's remind parents and caregivers to remain vigilant with children and youth around **ANY** bodies of water. Please share DCF's [water safety graphics](#) available in English and Spanish, and other [relevant materials](#), on your website, in your social media posts, and in an end-of-year message to parents.

Like you, we want every child who leaves school in June to enjoy a safe, healthy and connected summer.

Thank you.