

Incorporation home pool safety into mainstream lesson programming

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Background/Introduction

- Program based at YMCA Cook and Phillip Park and Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centres.
- Introduced as the under 5 year old drowning statistics increased in Australia.
- Wanted to heighten caregivers awareness of safety issues in and around home pools or when visiting a home with a pool.
- Aim to provide material and information to the 5,000 students parents and caregivers, who would then potentially pass on this information throughout the community.

Methods

- Strong connection with Austswim, Royal Life Saving Society and Swim Australia.
- Attend bi monthly talks at the Birthing Rites Centre in Bondi , and other preschools in the area supplying information re home pool safety issues including baths and wading pools.
- Implemented Home Pool Safety talk into our swimSAFER weeks and mainstream lessons.
- Parent information sheets distributed.
- Information provided includes supervision, barriers, swim lessons, flotation devices, how to react if your child is missing around waterie have an emergency action plan.
- When teaching a fall in and recovery exercise always included the statement 'Your baby should never fall into a pool as your will always be watching then and within' arms reach'.
- Educate and empower our Teachers so they are confident teaching and educating about home pool safety
- Providing support and positive reinforcement to families that have had 'near drowning incidents' and helping to get these children back into swimming lessons.

Results/Evaluation

- Slow process with some parents thinking our SwimSAFER week and information was not sufficient replacement for a structured lesson.
- Constantly handing our information-parents now want their children and themselves to learn more about home pool safety and heighten their awareness.
- Parents now approach staff and ask questions.
- From feedback received we know we have raised awareness and lowered the 'it cant happen to me mentality'.

Discussion

- Rated a success by staff and parents so plan is to continue coverage of home pool safety in the lessons and handouts.
- Future goal is to see all YMCA centres implementing this program and other swim schools to follow. This is now happening at more centres and growing.
- Challenges were educating staff and caregivers-once the reasons were explained and examples given they were easier to convert.
- Children and caregivers have much more awareness than 12 months ago before the program was implemented.
- Happy to assist other swim schools to implement. All swim schools should implement.

Conclusion

- Caregivers very enthusiastic for receiving knowledge on water and home pool safety.
- Teachers more educated and confident teaching pool and water safety.
- Program is more expansive and includes a Stop/Go Policy A Too Far Policy etc.
- Parents now coming forward and seeking out advice from our teachers if an incident in the home pool or holiday period has led to a child losing their confidence in the water.

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