

# This Pool Season: One More Drowning is One Too Many

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It's that time of the year again - pool season! As temperatures rise, there's nothing more fun for kids to do than splash away in the nearest pool.

As pediatricians, parents and grandparents, we must also be aware of the dangers that come with access to swimming pools. In fact, drowning is the No. 1 cause of death among children ages 1-4, here in Orange County, California and across the United States.

Every year, we hear tragic stories about accidental drownings. Here is what Dr. Nicole Hughes, Levi's mother, shared with the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics. "Our three-

*An unfenced backyard pool: A source of fun but a source of danger too!*

year-old son, Levi, drowned in June 2018 while we were on a beach vacation with friends. One moment, he was sitting on the couch watching TV while I cleaned up dinner. In the next, I pulled him from the bottom of the pool. Levi had somehow slipped out of the kitchen filled with people, including myself, my husband, and five other physician friends." Levi's family is working tirelessly to prevent child drowning.

Drowning can happen to any family. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) found that 69% of children younger than 5 years of age were not expected to be at or in the pool at the time of a drowning incident.

The only evidence-based best practice that has been documented through research to prevent the death or disability of a child from unsupervised access to a swimming pool is installation of a 4-sided isolation fence. The fence should include a self-closing, self-latching gate that meets the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission standard.

**The power of pediatricians as authentic, credible, trusted child health experts and advocates was once again apparent when we opposed CA State Senate Bill 736 which would have weakened the existing pool safety law. After raising our concerns with the bill's author, State Senator Josh Newman, he withdrew the bill. He committed to work with AAP CA to identify drowning prevention measures that can be inserted into future legislation.**

Please thank Senator Newman by [clicking here](#) and thanking him for working with California pediatricians on preventing child drowning.

And please take the time to listen to Nicole Hughes, Who Lost Son Levi to Drowning, Share a Message on Drowning Prevention: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQsro78hQC8>

Our AAP-OC Committee on Injury & Violence Prevention is partnering to form a network of California Pediatricians for Drowning Prevention. If you would like to join, please contact [phyllisagran@gmail.com](mailto:phyllisagran@gmail.com).

*\*AAP-Orange County Committee on Injury and Violence Prevention. Chair, Phyllis Agran, MD, MPH; Vice Chairs, Vinh Lam, MD & Sandra Murray, MD.*

## Resources

AAP Policy Statement: Prevention of Drowning.

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/143/5/e20190850>

American Academy of Pediatrics Drowning Prevention Toolkit. <https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/campaigns-and-toolkits/drowning-prevention/>

AAP-OC Drowning Prevention Initiative. <https://www.aap-oc.org/initiatives/injury-violence-prevention-2/#:~:text=Injuries%20Can%20Be%20Prevented,childhood%20injuries%20in%20Orange%20County>