



Maryland State Child Fatality Review Team (SCFRT)



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Maryland SCFRT Newsletter Summer 2011

From Our State Team Chairperson, Richard Lichenstein, MD

Update on Pediatric Drownings

Although summer brings fun, and relaxation, it is also a time when we hear of tragedies of drowning. Recently, 4 Maryland children have died of drowning in open water, pools, water craft and a tub. During these last few weeks of summer, it is still a good opportunity to review in your community what we know about water safety. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) updated their policy statement in 2010 to reflect new information on pediatric drowning.

Drowning is the second leading cause of injury death among U.S. children between 1 and 19 years of age. In 2006, drowning claimed the lives of approximately 1,100 U.S. children. Rates of drowning death vary with age, gender, and race with toddlers and male adolescents being at highest risk.

New information and research is presented on (1) the World Health Organization's (WHO) classification of drowning, (2) drain-entrapment and hair-entanglement injuries, (3) dangers of inflatable and portable pools, and (4) the possible benefit of swimming lessons for young children.

The WHO defines drowning as the "process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid" and classifies outcomes as "death," "no morbidity," or "morbidity" (further categorized as "moderately disabled," "severely disabled," "vegetative state/coma," and "brain death").

From 1990-2007, there have been 96 cases and 15 deaths of entrapment secondary to drains on pools and spas. A child inserts a hand or foot into the pipe, and then becoming trapped by increasing suction that causes tissue swelling. The child subsequently drowns when they cannot extricate themselves. Hair can also get caught with the same deadly outcomes. Entrapment and entanglement can be prevented by the use of special drain covers, safety vacuum-release systems (SVRSs), filter pumps with multiple drains, and a variety of other pressure-venting filter-construction techniques. In 2007, Congress passed the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (effective December 2008), which requires special drain covers, unblockable drains, and SVRSs for all public pools and spas in the United States.

Inflatable pools of varying size and capacity are popular but dangerous. These pools have soft sides and children can lean in and tip over into the water head first. Parents often do not use the same precautions that are required for other pools.

In the past, the AAP has recommended swim lessons for children at the time of the 4th birthday. These recommendations have been loosened secondary to new research on swim lessons. In one study, it was found that swimming lessons do not increase the risk of drowning in 1- to 4-year-olds and may actually provide a reduction in drowning risk in this age group. Drowning victims were less likely than matched controls (3% vs. 26%, respectively) to have had formal swimming instruction. The current evidence is insufficient to support a recommendation that all 1- to 4-year-old children receive swimming lessons. Even advanced swimming skills will not always prevent drowning. Swimming lessons must be considered only as one part of a multi-tiered approach to drowning prevention which should include effective pool barriers and constant, capable supervision. (Cont. on page 2). Reference: Prevention of Drowning – Committee on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention

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Upcoming State CRF Mtgs:

September 21, 2011

 **Annual Conference
November 16, 2011**



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**Take Home Water Safety Messages
for your community**

Supervision of all children around water is vital but the following should always be considered too:

4-sided isolation pool fencing for all new and existing residential pools

Certified lifeguards with current CPR certification for pools that are accessible to the public and basic safety requirements for natural swimming areas and public and private recreational facilities.

Enforce laws that prohibit alcohol and other drug consumption by boat occupants, not just operators.

Attention to first look in the water for a missing child in environments where water is present.

Further CPR education for all potential bystanders

Systematic reporting of circumstances surrounding immersion events

Support services for families and friends of drowning victims.



Agency Highlights: Citizen's Review Board for Children



One Unified Volunteer Voice for Safety, Permanency and Advocacy

The Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) supports all efforts to provide permanence for children in foster care. This State Board provides oversight to Maryland's child protection agencies examining policy issues, procedures, legislation, resources and barriers relating to out-of-home placement and the permanency of children's placements. The State Board makes recommendations to the General Assembly around ways of improving Maryland's child welfare system.

The Citizen Review Board for Children consists of Governor-Appointed Volunteers in each of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland that meet to conduct reviews of children in care. Local boards make recommendation regarding the department's permanency plan for a child to the department and juvenile courts. Local boards will also review cases of children and youth involved with the child welfare system at the request of private citizens involved with the case, the courts, and local departments of social services.

MISSION

Volunteer reviewers monitor child welfare systems and review cases, make findings and recommendations, and advocate to improve the administration of the system and the management of individual cases. As a result, children will be safe; be placed in stable, permanent living arrangements without undue delay; enjoy continuity of relationships; and have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

GOALS

- Volunteer citizens review cases in order to gather information about how effectively the child welfare system discharges its responsibilities and to advocate, as necessary, for each child in out-of-home care.
- The Citizens Review Board for Children provides useful and timely information about the adequacy and effectiveness of efforts to promote child safety and well-being and achieve or maintain permanency for children and about plans and efforts to improve services.
- The Citizens Review Board for Children formulates recommendations for improving case management and the child welfare system and effectively communicates the recommendations to decision-makers and the public.

Citizens Review Board for Children Contact Information

Nettie Anderson-Burrs, State Board Chairperson
Sabrena Barnes-McAllister, Administrator

For Volunteer Opportunities Contact Marlo Palmer,
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<http://www.dhr.maryland.gov/crbc/index.php>



Maryland's Children Are Returning to School! Maryland law states that vehicles must come to a complete stop on both sides of the street if there is no physical divider or barrier. Drivers who pass school buses while the lights are flashing will receive a citation that carries a maximum payable fine of \$570 and a 3-point penalty. Drivers who stop but then proceed while the lights are flashing will receive a citation that carries a maximum payable fine of \$570 and a 2-point penalty.



News to share?? Please contact the newsletter editors:
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Visit Our State Child Fatality Review website:

http://fha.maryland.gov/mch/cfr_home.cfm

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