Add Learning to Swim to Your Child’s Basic Life Skills

(GREENVILLE SC) There is a list of basic life skills all parents instinctively know they must teach their children to keep them safe and healthy. It includes habits like looking both ways before you cross the street, washing your hands with soap and water and eating the right amount of fruits and vegetables every day.

For too many parents, safety in and around water is not on the list; and that’s something we need to change.

Fatal drowning is the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14 years old. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in five drowning deaths are children. And for every child who dies from drowning, there are another five who receive emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries. The problem is particularly acute among minority communities. African American children ages 5 to 14 are three times more likely to drown than their Caucasian counterparts. The disparity is partly due to the lack of swimming experience among these children.

According to a recent national research study conducted by the USA Swimming Foundation and the University of Memphis, 70 percent of African American and 60 percent of Hispanic children cannot swim, compared to 40 percent of Caucasian children.

The YMCA of Greenville is committed to reducing water-related injuries, particularly in communities where children are most at risk.

National Water Safety Month is May, and it’s a great time for parents to consider enrolling their children in life-saving swim lessons. And in an effort to make sure that anyone who wants to learn to swim can, the YMCA of Greenville has need-based financial aid available for swim lessons to ensure that low-income and underserved communities can participate in swim lessons. Swim lessons teach young people valuable skills like what to do if they find themselves in the water unexpectedly, a situation every child should be equipped to handle.

The Y is working hard to bridge cultural and access gaps that can prevent some children from learning important water safety skills.
If children know how to stay safe in and around water, swimming can be a lifelong source of fun and exercise. Instead of keeping your children away from water, help them learn fundamental water safety skills by enrolling them in lessons. These classes can provide them a new, exciting way to keep active and meet new friends.

To learn more about the swim lesson programs, please visit ymcagreenville.org/swim-lessons

Tim Rymer
Aquatics Director
YMCA of Greenville