



Summer Water Safety

There are alarming statistics from studies of causes of injury and death in the autistic population. Tragically, drowning is among the leading cause of death for persons with autism, accounting for 91% of deaths in children with autism 14 years old and younger. (Nat'l. Autism Assoc.) Ages 5-7 seem to be the "danger years." About a third of all parents with a child with autism state they had a "close call." I had my own close call when my child went missing as a toddler – all the warning signs were there, we had a child that wandered, we were in an unfamiliar neighborhood, there was a lake nearby, and we were in a large gathering of friends. He was found sitting on the bank of the lake – we got lucky. About half of children with autism wander- if your child wanders, here's a comprehensive [caregiver wandering toolkit](#).

Autism Speaks offers some suggestions for water safety:

1. Start early – it's never too early to start teaching your child about water safety.
2. Sign up for swim lessons –some YMCA's offer swim lessons for children with special needs (YMCA's in Houma, Baton Rouge and Alexandria are listed as providing lessons.)
3. Teach the dangers of water – being safe is more than just being able to swim, a child's attraction to water can lead kids into dangerous situations.
4. Take precautions to prevent wandering – install door alarms, make sure pools are inaccessible.
5. Spread the word – let neighbors know if your child wanders, alert first responders – [Autism Speaks](#) has sample forms you can use to alert others.

When taking swim lessons, the National Autism Association suggests you **have your child fully dressed** for some of the lessons – a child that falls into a body of water will likely have clothes and shoes on – practicing swimming fully dressed can help teach a child to swim with the added weight.

Janice- jhuber@tc-aba.com

THIS MONTH'S FAMILY MEETINGS

Houma 7/27 Group Meeting at **8:45am in person**

Thibodaux 7/26 Group Meeting at **8:45am in person**

Baton Rouge pre-K and school-aged 7/19 Group Meeting at **8:45am in person and online**

Hammond 7/11 Group Meeting at **8:30am – in person**
Spanish translation available

Lafayette 7/18 Group Meeting at **9:00am- in person and online**

All New Orleans/Houma/ Thibodaux 7/28 Group Meetings at **9:30am and 12 noon – online only**

Group sessions are open to any Touchstone parent or other legal guardian. Other caregivers may attend **with** parents/guardians. Please refrain from bringing children to the group meetings. Individual sessions can be conducted at the centers, in the home, or in the community, and address your child's specific needs.

Join Us! If you are unable to attend the monthly meetings, please contact Angie Lanoux at: alanoux@tc-aba.com to set up individual meetings.

Parent Collaboration Support:

Houma/Thibodaux/NOLA- Paula White at pgwhite@tc-aba.com

Baton Rouge/Lafayette/Hammond- Mary Johnson at mjohnson@tc-aba.com

July Progress Update Meetings

Each July, progress update meetings are held to share information on client progress with parents and caregivers. Be on the lookout for notices to schedule your child's meeting.