

HOW TO CREATE A DROWNING PREVENTION TASK FORCE

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Establish a Team

Invite professionals in your local area for a meeting to address drowning prevention. Include members of the health department injury prevention team, children's hospital injury prevention coordinators and children's medical center's community relation coordinators. We would also suggest that you invite first responders like fire/police community relations coordinators and emergency personnel. Every state has a chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics with medical and associate directors that can be a big help in securing the cooperation and participation of local pediatricians. Finally, recreation and parks aquatic directors and swim school owners would have a vested interest in drowning prevention programs.

Present Rx Swim Program at the Meeting

Introduce the national prescription program as designed by the Florida Task Force and adopted by the Arizona and NY task forces. Explain and distribute the Water Smart Babies Florida handbook and position paper as an example for your state to adopt and modify for your county and state needs. Such alterations would include your county: swim facilities, barriers, CPR First/Aid classes and tips on supervision. Establish a launch date (i.e.: April 1) for your local county program and a potential date for your state launch.

Establish Sub- committees

Now it's time to get to work. Create committees to inform the public, enlist participation and collect data. Suggested sub-committees are:

- Aquatic Facilities committee – to inform and enlist their participation in the program
- Pediatric committee – to inform and enlist their participation in the program
 - Present program information to your state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Contact the director of your state chapter for a meeting.
 - Present at the chapter's semi-annual conference or showcase poster session.
 - Contact large pediatric groups to explain the program and place Water SMART Babies handbooks in their offices for distribution by the doctors.
- Handbook committee – to edit and print the state Water SMART Babies handbook
- Marketing committee – to create the local website that directs to the national site and promote the prescription swim program state wide.
- Data collection committee – collect data from swim facilities and pediatric offices

Launch Program and Collect Data

Once the program has been initiated it will be necessary to collect data. Pediatricians will report the number of swim prescriptions that have been provided to their patients. Swim facilities will record swimmer participation from the Rx program. The health department will monitor local and state changes in near-drowning incidents and drowning statistics. All data must be reported to national governing board and placed on the state website.