



Autism Society
Inland Empire

SWIMMING

FUN & SAFETY

TOOLKIT



IEAutism.org

**Drowning is the #1 cause of death in individuals who have Autism.
Children with ASD are 160 times more likely to experience nonfatal
and fatal drowning than their neurotypical peers.**

<https://www.autismfl.org/drowning-prevention>

The water and wandering initiative are a national effort to increase water safety education and training across the Autism community to decrease the tragic loss of life caused by water and wandering-related accidents. This program works to not only prevent wandering-related tragedies but to increase water safety skills among Autistic children, teens, and adults- and those who support them.

We have included social narratives which is an evidenced-based practice designed to teach and promote appropriate social behavior by providing learners with a model that is delivered through a narrative format rather than an in vivo or video format. Research has shown that cartoon techniques, such as thought and speech bubbles, enable the individual with autism to get a sense of social interactions and understand the hidden rules that govern behaviors (Kerr & Durkin, 2004). One cartooning strategy is known as Comic Strip Conversations developed by Carol Gray (1994). By illustrating conversation through simple drawings, the strategy helps the student to identify “what other people say and do” and emphasizes “what other people may be thinking.”

We have also included an updated list of programs who specifically serve children/adults with Autism or other disabilities. **The programs listed in this guide will have an (S) for segregated (only children with special needs) or an (I) for Inclusion for classes that have a mix of children with and without special needs.** Many of these programs may have a full inclusion swim program, however, we focused on those programs we know have experience with our population.

We updated this list May 2023 with organizations we were aware of. If you have a resource, you would like us to include, please email us at info@ieautism.org.

We appreciate you being part of our community. Have a wonderful summer!

Table of Contents

Paying for Swim Lessons

First Five.....	4
Regional Center Guidelines	5
Organizations Who Provide Swim Lessons.....	7
Caregiver Water Safety Checklist	10
Social Story: Staying Safe Near Water.....	11
Social Story: Staying Safe at the Pool	15
Social Story: Staying Safe at the Beach	16
Social Story: Staying Safe at the Lake	17
Social Story: Staying Safe on the Dock	18
Social Story: Staying Safe on the Boat	19
Social Story: Staying Safe in Puddles	20
Social Story: Staying Safe at the Aquarium.....	21
Social Story: Staying Safe Water at Home.....	22
Social Story: Staying Safe Water Safety.....	23

First Five Riverside

The First5 Riverside/ SoCal Water Babies grant funds between 3 and 4 consecutive weeks of survival float lessons for children under 3 years, and 3 – 4 weeks of Swim Float Swim lessons for children 4 - 5 years at no cost. These grant subsidized swim-float-swim and survival float lessons are available at 4 locations in Riverside County: Orangecrest, French Valley, Cathedral City and Norco. Each location has limited availability and scholarship approval is required prior to scheduling your lessons.

Minimum Qualifications:

1. The student must be 5-years old or younger
2. Students must live in Riverside County – Verification Required
3. Students must meet low-income guidelines – Verification Required
4. Students must submit an intake form prior to beginning lessons

Students will be scheduled on a first come / first serve basis. Once funding has been exhausted, we will take an interest list for next year.

These lessons would be great for siblings or children who can learn in fully included group environments.

Visit

<https://socalwaterbabies.com/no-cost-lessons> (I)

<https://www.ymcacornor.org/programs/swimming/swimming-lessons> (I)

Inland Regional Center Clients

In 2022 Regional Centers were once again allowed to coordinate and fund social recreation for regional center clients. Social recreation is defined as any opportunity that will allow IRC clients access to public recreational activities for the purpose of developing and enhancing meaningful interpersonal relationships. These activities:

- Should allow opportunities for interaction
- Around and/or integrated with typically functioning peers
- Must be social in nature

Examples of social recreation include swim classes, horseback riding, sports, monthly gym memberships, art classes, special events like dances, Special Olympics, YMCA, and more.

Inland Regional Center has three options to help clients access these services. You can use any or all these options:

1. **Coaches to Support.** Vendored agencies can staff a coach, or the Regional Center client or family can recommend a coach to be hired by the agency to facilitate and teach socialization skills put in the Individualized Service Plan. Parents should handle drop off and pick up. The coach staffing agency does not pay mileage.
 - For minors - the coach can provide 4 hours a day, not to exceed 12 days a month. An optional 2-hour assessment can be provided.
 - For adults - the coach can provide 3 hours a day not to exceed 12 days per month.
2. **Receive a Stipend up to \$100 a month.** This service must be requested to your Regional Center caseworker and added to your Individualized Service Plan (ISP). Monthly stipends to offset the cost of social recreation programs. These costs will be reimbursed to families not to exceed \$100 a month (\$1200 a fiscal year). The stipend is paid through a Fiscal Management System (FMS) after receipts are submitted to receive the reimbursement. This cannot be given a lump sum - it must be done monthly. Any other costs are the responsibility of the parent or Regional Center client.

3. **Choose an organization that is already vendored for these services with Inland Regional Center.** As of May 2023, Inland Regional Center is working with a few organizations to become vendored. If you have a social recreation company that may be interested in becoming vendored, please have them contact the Inland Regional Center's Community Services Department.

- www.inlandrc.org/service-providers/#newproviders
- School aged - <https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Request-for-Need-028-Social-Rec-School-Age.pdf>
- Adults - <https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Request-for-Need-055-Social-Rec-Adults.pdf>

Please contact your Regional Center caseworker to request these services.

Swim Lessons

Aquatic Zone (I)

Corona

951.739.4300

<https://theaquaticzone.com/>

Does not have a special needs program but has a lot of experience teaching students with Autism to swim. Year-round programs.

Aqua Tots (S)

Rancho Cucamonga

909-259-0500

<https://www.aqua-tots.com/swim-levels/additional-swim-services/>

Has a Special Needs Aquatic Program (S.N.A.P.) is designed to create lessons tailored to each child's special needs and abilities. This class may serve children who have been diagnosed with behavioral, developmental, learning, medical or mental challenges.

Big Kahuna Swim Academy (S)

(909) 273- 9680

<https://bigkahunaswim.com/>

Private, One-On-One Swim Lessons at one of our heated pools (Norco or Riverside), Mobile Swim Lessons (we come to your pool) & Virtual Swim Lessons. Our #1 priority is water safety and drowning prevention; making sure that each and every one of our students is learned and mastered what are called the 8 Basic Water Safety Skills which will enable them to save themselves in any water emergency.

Desert Swim Academy (S)

Tanya Orozco – Special Needs Swim Lessons

Palm Desert

(760) 831-9066

www.desertswimacademy.com

Desert Swim Academy welcomes all ages and all disabilities.

Fontana Park Aquatic Center (S)

(909) 854-5111

Fontana

<https://www.fontana.org/2566/Fontana-Park-Aquatic-Center>

Aquability (Special Needs Swim Lessons) Ages 4 yrs.+ Students enrolled will range in all ages and abilities with different intellectual and physical disabilities. Students will be swim tested and placed together based on ability during the first-class meeting. No swim test required.

Passion for Splashin' (S)

<https://passionswim.com>

Teaches lessons out of two private home pools, one in Upland on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and the other in LaVerne on Mondays and Fridays. Has over two decades of experience in teaching students of all abilities and is the mom of a child with Autism.

Riverside City Parks and Recreation (S)

https://www.riversideca.gov/park_rec/programs-sports/aquatics/swim-lessons

The City of Riverside PRCSD accommodates all participants regardless of limitations individuals may have. The City of Riverside Aquatics program along with Swim Angel Fish provide a fun and safe environment while developing swimmers' abilities based on individual needs providing them with tools and skills necessary to become a successful swimmer. Go to their website to complete form and email. Private lessons are available.

Special Olympics (S)

www.sosc.org/sports/swimming

Held in Central Riverside, Desert, Fontana, Mojave, Rebels, Temecula
February – June

Because of the wide array of swimming events offered, it is appropriate for a range of ages and ability levels. Swimming competition events are based on a variety of strokes. An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial Instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley events, diving starts or diving.

SwimSafe Aquatics (S)

(951) 226-7562

<https://swimsafeaquatics.com/special-needs-adaptive-1>

Menifee

They offer year-round swimming lessons in our customized saltwater lesson pool, which is heated to 92 degrees. We use a combination of sand, salt, and copper ion technology to keep the pool clean, without the use of harmful chemicals. They have over 25 years' experience and a passion for teaching. We specialize in the Swim Float Swim method and have been highly trained by the best in the business, including the originator of the Swim Float Swim Method. We are highly trained and specialize in teaching children with Special Needs.

Sunsational Swim School (S)

<https://www.sunsationalswimschool.com/swimming-lessons/Inland-Empire-CA>

1-888-788-2140

Private Swim Lesson in your own pool – Inland Empire. Their effective-yet-gentle approach to swimming lessons in all of the suburbs of the Inland Empire area—from San Bernardino to Murrieta and everywhere in between—consists of private, personalized classes that quickly allow our students of all ages (even adults!) to gain the skills to better avoid falling into a pool, and how to turn around and reach the wall if they do fall in.

Temecula Community Services (S)





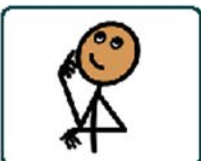

<https://temeculaca.gov/408/Adaptive-Swim-Lessons>

Learning to swim is for everyone. These classes for participants with special needs will focus on basic water skills and water adjustment to help participants gain confidence in the water and improve kicking and stroking ability.

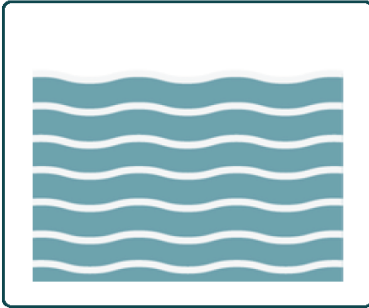
Victorville Parks and Recreation – VIP Program (S)

www.victorvilleca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/6410/637867445794430000

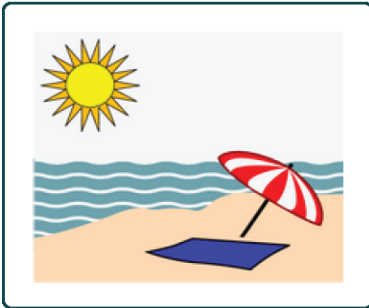
Ages three and older. An adult must get in the water with the participant and teach them water safety at his/her own pace. A lifeguard will be present for instruction guidance.

- | | | | |
|----------|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 1 |  | Designate a responsible person to supervise the water without distraction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use something visual or tangible to identify the water supervisor like a hat or lanyard. • Schedule water supervisors in intervals to ensure optimum attention to the water. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 |  | Stay within an arm's length of children that are in or near water. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 |  | Be mindful of toys in or around the water that would entice someone to bolt or enter the water. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 |  | Model safe behaviors, narrate safe behaviors, and practice safe behaviors in all water environments to promote generalization. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 |  | Be mindful of your child's interests and typical behaviors so that you can be best prepared. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 |  | Have a safety plan when in or near water. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

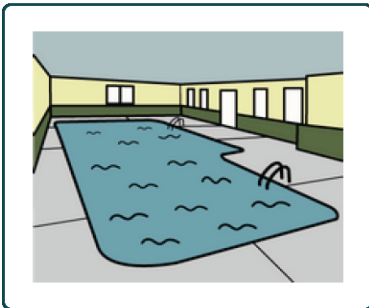
Staying Safe: Near Water



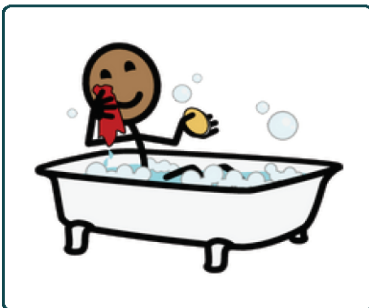
There is water everywhere.



**There is water at the beach,
in a lake, or in the ocean.**



**There is water in a puddle,
on a dock, or in the pool.**



**There is water in the bathtub,
in a fish tank, or a big aquarium.**

Staying Safe: Near Water



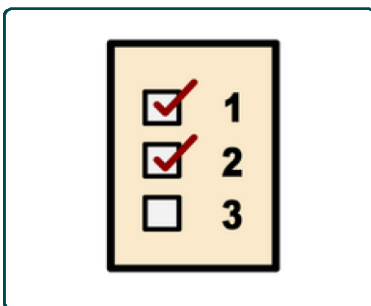
Being in the water can be fun.



But being near water can be dangerous if I don't follow the water safety rules.

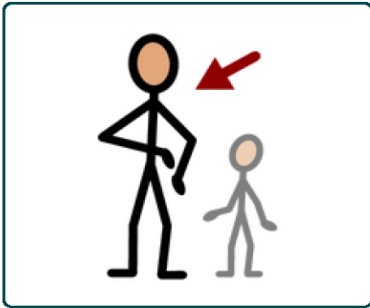


To stay safe and have fun in the water, I will learn the water safety rules.

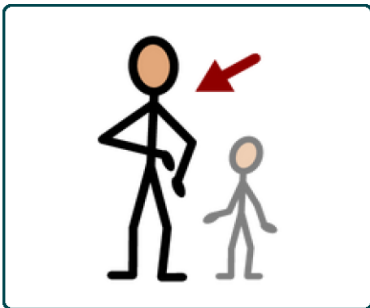


When I am in or near the water, these are the safety rules I will follow.

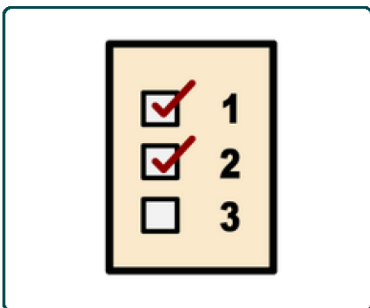
Staying Safe: Near Water



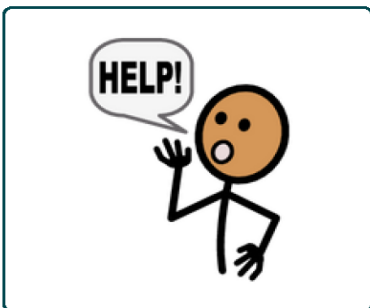
I will stay close to a helper when I am in or near the water.



A helper can be an adult like a parent, a teacher, or a caregiver.

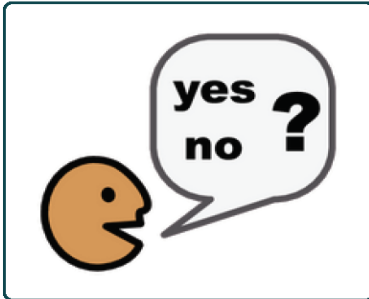


I will follow directions.

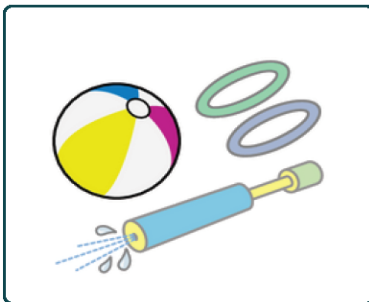


I will ask for help.

Staying Safe: Near Water



I will ask my helper before I go into the water.



I will ask for help if I want to get something that is in the water.

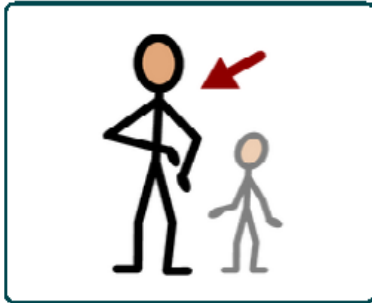


When I follow the safety rules, I can stay safe in and around the water.

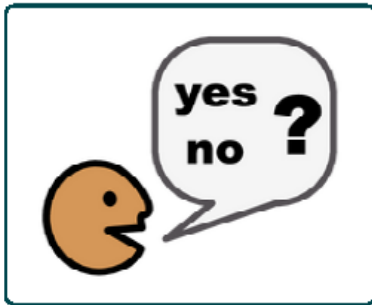


When I follow the safety rules, water can be fun and safe!

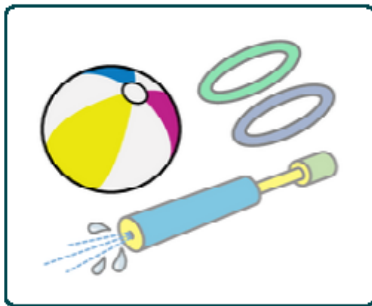
Staying Safe: At the Pool



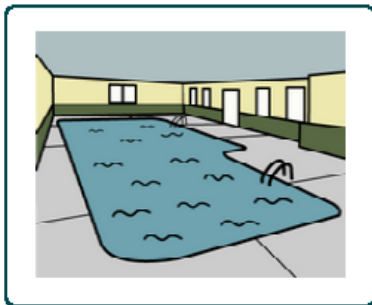
When I am at the pool I will stay close to my helper.



When I am at the pool I will ask my helper before I go in the water.

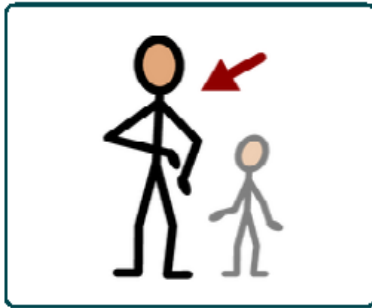


When I see a toy in the pool that I want, I will ask for help to get it.

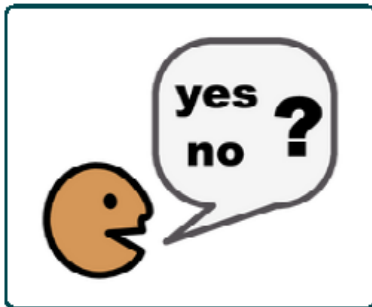


When I am at the pool I will follow the safety rules so that I can stay safe.

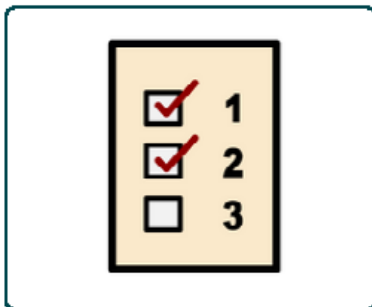
Staying Safe: At the Beach



When I am at the beach I will stay close to my helper.



When I am at the beach I will ask my helper before I go into the water.

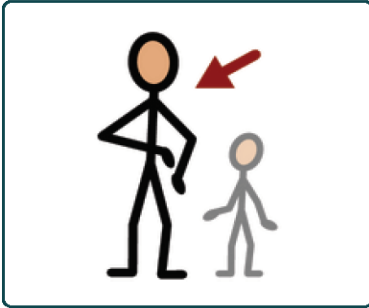


When I am at the beach I will follow directions so that I can stay safe.

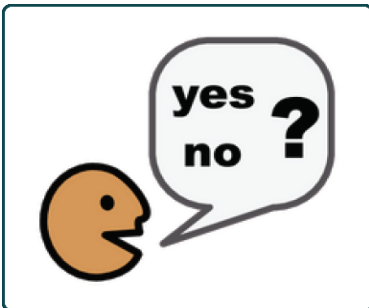


I am safe when I follow the safety rules at the beach.

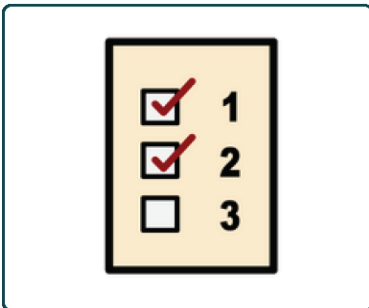
Staying Safe: At the Lake



When I am at the lake I will stay close to my helper.



When I am at the lake I will ask my helper before I go into the water.

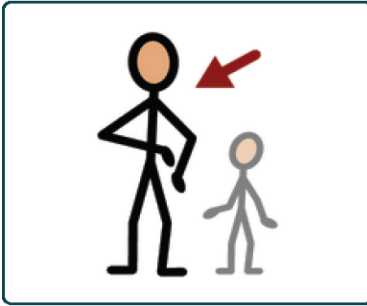


When I am at the lake I will follow directions so that I can stay safe.

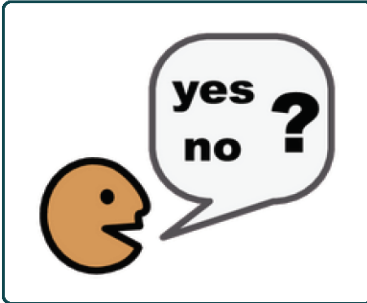


I am safe when I follow the safety rules at the lake.

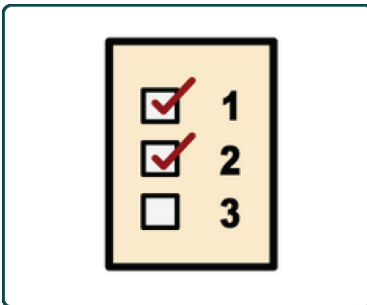
Staying Safe: On the Dock



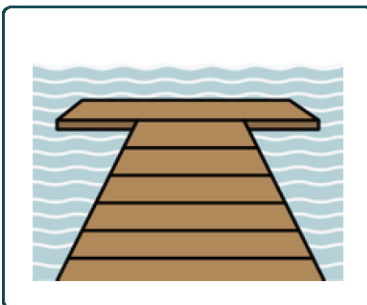
When I am on the dock I will stay close to my helper.



When I am on the dock I will ask my helper before going near or into the water.

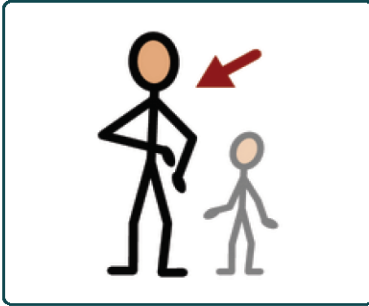


When I am on the dock I will follow directions so that I can stay safe.

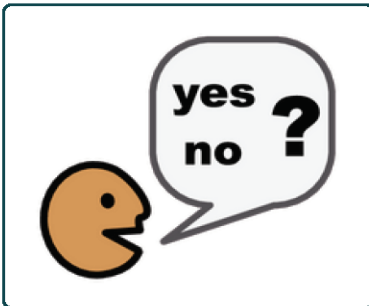


I am safe when I follow the safety rules on the dock.

Staying Safe: On the Boat



When I am on the boat I will stay close to my helper.



When I am on the boat I will ask my helper before I go into the water.

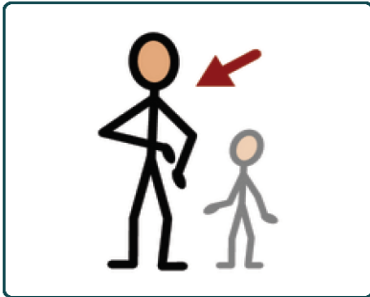


When I am on the boat I will wear a lifejacket.

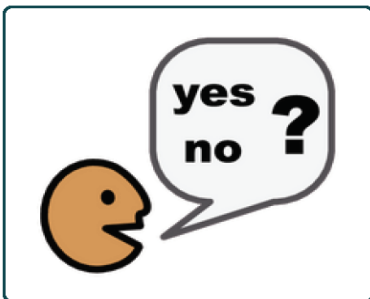


When I am on the boat I will follow the safety rules so that I can stay safe.

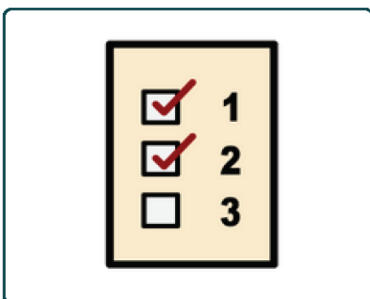
Staying Safe: In Puddles



**When I want to jump in a puddle
I will stay close to my helper.**



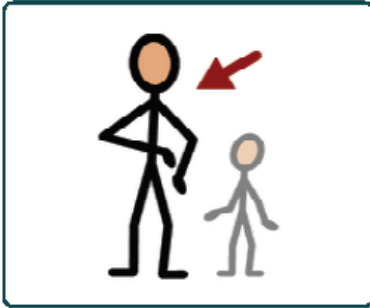
**When I want to jump in a puddle
I will ask my helper before I do.**



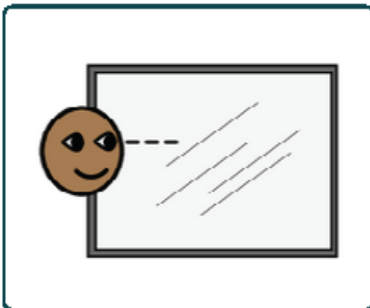
**When I want to jump in a puddle
I will follow directions so that I
can stay safe.**



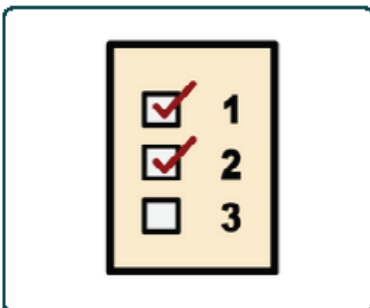
**I am safe when I follow the safety
rules when jumping in puddles.**



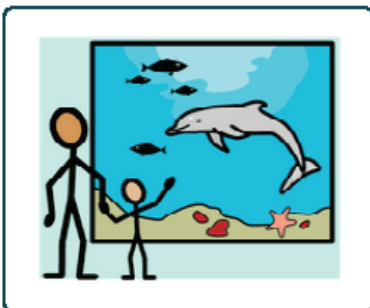
When I am at the aquarium I will stay close to my helper.



When I am at the aquarium I will keep my hands off the glass. I want the animals to feel safe in their home.



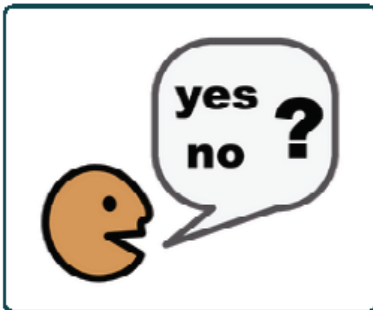
When I am at the aquarium I will follow directions so that I can stay safe.



I am safe when I follow the safety rules at the aquarium.



When the water is on in the bathtub, shower, or the sink I will follow directions.



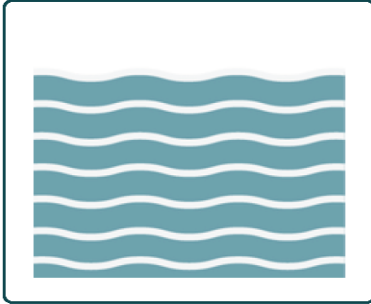
I will ask before I turn the water on in the bathtub, shower, or sink.



I will ask an adult before going into the bathtub or shower each time.



I am safe when I follow the rules when I use the water in the bathtub, shower, or sink.



There is water everywhere.



Water can look different in different places like the beach, lake, ocean, in a puddle, on a dock, pool, bathtub, fish tank, or a big aquarium.



Being in the water can be fun, but it can be dangerous if I don't follow the safety rules.



When I am in or near water I will follow the safety rules so that I can stay safe and have fun.

Autism Society Inland Empire Options Policy

This Resource Guide was developed to provide families and professionals with an opportunity to find resources related to autism in the Inland Empire in one place.

All information provided or published by the Autism Society Inland Empire is for information purposes only. Specific treatment, therapy or services should be provided to an individual only at the direction of the individual's doctor, caregiver, or other qualified professional. References to any treatment or therapy option, program, service, or treatment provider are not an endorsement by the Autism Society. References of treatments, therapies, programs, services, and/or providers are not intended to be comprehensive statements. You should investigate alternatives that may be more appropriate for a specific individual. The Autism Society assumes no responsibility for the use made of any information published or provided. The Autism Society Inland Empire provides information, but it does not constitute medical or legal information. Referrals provided are suggestions to organizations that might help, but do not constitute a recommendation. The Autism Society Inland Empire cannot be held responsible for consequences that arise from individual dealings with a professional or organization. The inclusion of any organization does not imply endorsement, and omission does not imply disapproval. The Autism Society Inland Empire may add or remove organizations from this list at its discretion.

We updated this list May 2023 with organizations we were aware of. If you have a resource, you would like us to include, please email us at info@ieautism.org.