

WATER SAFETY ACTIVITY GUIDE

FOR CARERS

WE
LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS
VE

1. **Be familiar** with the needs and capability of all children and young people placed in your care
2. **Assess** each activity/location and each child/young person before they commence the water activity
3. **Consider** any previous assessment you have completed if the location remains the same
4. **Seek advice** from a medical practitioner for clients with Epilepsy and Diabetes management plans or Polydipsia, Medical Conditions or Impairment that could impact their ability e.g. intellectual, physical, respiratory, and cardiovascular, autonomic nervous system etc.
5. If there are **foreseeable risks** put strategies in place to manage these risks
6. **Ensure** there is mobile phone or other telephone reception at the location of a water activity
7. Provide **appropriate supervision** at all times around water

S

STOP AND THINK

- ▶ Don't rush in and get carried away, plan
- ▶ Ask:
 - ▶ Do I have all of the information for the water activity to be completed safely?
 - ▶ Is the water activity able to be completed safely for the child, young person and carer?
 - ▶ Do I have the resources for the task to be completed safely?

Are you familiar with the needs of the child or young person including level of water competency, current alerts, medical issues or impairments, manual handling plans, any personal care requirements?

Are you familiar with the location and environment where the water activity will be undertaken?

A

ASSESS AND IDENTIFY HAZARDS/RISKS

- ▶ Assess the location/environment and find/identify any risks
- ▶ Check to see what else is happening in the area and surroundings
- ▶ Understand the limits and skills of a child, young person and yourself if you are directly supporting the water activity
- ▶ Identify what is the chance the risks could affect you, the child or young person, or others
- ▶ Identify what would be the consequences if the risk isn't eliminated or managed

What are the potential risks?

- Crocodiles, rips, no lifeguard
- Carer has no confidence in the water
- Child/young person has inflated view of their water competency
- Seizures or other consequence related to a medical condition
- Young person engaging in water activity with friends and without direct support/supervision
- Backyard pool has no compliance certificate
- The adult/supervising person is responsible for too many children

F

FIX THE HAZARDS WITH EFFECTIVE CONTROLS AND ADVISE OTHERS

- ▶ Eliminate the risks/hazards
- ▶ Control the risks/hazards
- ▶ Minimise the consequences

How could you eliminate the risk?

- Not proceed with the water activity
- Go to a location where a life guard is on duty
- Increase water competency before commencing activity
- Have a swimming companion/spotter

How could you control the risk?

- Use of safety equipment e.g. life jacket
- Only enter water to waist height
- Carers develop their level of water competency e.g. water safety qualification
- Child or young person develop their level of water competency e.g. water safety qualification, swimming lessons

E

ENGAGE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Explain any new rules/expectations and advise why the changes are important for the safety and wellbeing of the client and those supporting them

Ensure there is understanding and awareness of:

- the type of water activity being undertaken
- roles and responsibilities during the activity
- expectations/rules
- any risks/hazards to be managed



All staff, contractors, carers and other volunteers share the responsibility to support clients to engage in water based activities in accordance with the following guiding principles:

1. It is our responsibility to provide and support clients with safe and appropriate water activities of their choice and to support goals of water competency and safety awareness.
2. Sun Smart strategies are used at all times (Sun smart – Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, Slide).
3. Children must always be actively supervised and clients should always swim with another person – never swim alone.
4. Before entering the water a risk assessment must be conducted to consider any foreseeable risks - Risk considerations **MUST** include - water competency of clients and their physical, psychological and emotional functioning and any known medical condition or impairment **AND** the appropriate level of support and supervision **MUST** be provided along with other control measures.
5. The preferred location for water activities is public swimming facilities with professional life guards are on duty.
6. ALL water activities we support clients to undertake and equipment used must adhere to all legislative safety standards or requirements (including compliance certificates for pools located in private residences).
7. We encourage clients to be aware and understand potential hazards and risks through education and learning opportunities such as swimming lessons, surf safety education, or water safety qualifications.
8. Access to therapeutic support by a professional with water safety qualifications must be considered in accordance with the individual funding arrangement of clients.
9. Some medical conditions or impairments may impact on the capability of a client to safely engage in water activities e.g. intellectual, physical, respiratory, cardiovascular, autonomic nervous system (such as PEG, epilepsy, seizure activity, diabetes and polydipsia).