

Policy Number:		Effective/ Revision Date:	5/3/19
Policy Title:	Swimming Pool Policy		
Policy:	It is the policy of Extraordinary Families to promote safety for all children and youth who are under the supervision of the agency in foster care. This includes ensuring swimming pools are equipped with the necessary safety mechanisms according to regulations and state law and that resource parents adhere to safety requirements and guidelines defined herein.		
Purpose:	To clarify swimming pool regulations and establish swimming pool safety guidelines for resource parents.		
Responsibilities:	Direct service workers and supervisors, Director of Programs, Resource Parents		
Reference/ Relevant Documents:	Swimming Pool Agreement		

SUMMARY

In California, drowning is a leading cause of injury-related deaths among children under the age of five, and it is the second-leading cause of injury-related deaths for children between the ages of 1 and 14. For every child who dies from drowning, another five receive emergency care for nonfatal submersion injuries, with more than 50% of drowning victims requiring hospitalization or transfer for further care (compared with a hospitalization rate of about 6% for all unintentional injuries). These nonfatal drowning injuries can cause severe brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities, such as memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning.

Children under the age of five are at greatest risk. They are very active and curious and may fall in a body of water and drown silently without calling out for help. The whole event can happen in just a minute or two, and the majority of these drownings take place at the homes of parents, relatives or neighbors.

Title 22 Regulations (and the California Pool Safety Act) require specific safety mechanisms in place for all swimming pools to help prevent unintentional drowning.

A **swimming pool** is defined as any in-ground or above-ground structure, including standard swimming pools, hot tubs, spas, portable and non-portable wading pools, ponds and other water features.

Safety Requirements

The first line of safety is to keep children from having access to the water. Pools must be made inaccessible with appropriate barriers.

The first type of barrier is a fence or enclosure. "Enclosure" means a fence, wall, or other barrier that isolates a swimming pool from access to the home. The enclosure must be installed according to the manufacturer's specifications and meet the following criteria:

- Must be a minimum of 60" (5') high;

- Cannot obscure the view of the pool;
- A Self-closing gate must open away from the pool and have a self-closing latch no more than 6" from the top;
- No gaps or voids in the enclosure wider than 4 inches, with a maximum vertical clearance from the ground to the bottom of the enclosure no more than 2 inches; and
- The outside surface must be free of protrusions, cavities, or other physical characteristics that would serve as handholds or footholds that could enable a child below to climb.

Additional Barriers that may be used (but not to supersede an enclosure, unless approved by EF) may include:

- "Approved safety pool cover" – a manually or power-operated safety pool cover that meets all of the performance standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) (i.e. supported by flotation devices, strong enough to support the weight of an adult, and remain in place and locked while the pool is not in use).
- "Exit alarms" – devices that make audible, continuous alarm sounds when any door or window, that permits access from the residence to the pool area is opened or is left ajar.

Pool alarms, safety sensors that can be added to pools to alert the adult whenever something enters the pool, may add an extra layer of security.

Safety Guidelines

- Consider swim lessons and water safety training for all ages. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends starting at 4 years old. Those who are able to swim or get to the side of the pool in case of accidental entry will have a much higher chance of avoiding a drowning.
- Never leave a child unsupervised in a body of water, even to answer the phone or use the restroom. Children must be supervised at all times by an adult who is able to swim.
- Do not assume someone else is watching your child. Too often children drown amongst a crowd of friends in a backyard pool, surrounded by adults who simply didn't notice. Keep your eye on your children at all times. And remember, flotation devices are **NOT** a substitute for careful supervision.
- Keep your CPR and first aid training up-to-date at all times and complete an EF approved water safety training course.
- Use flotation devices only as they were designed to be used. Inappropriate use of flotation devices can cause devastating results, such as being stuck upside down under water.
- Discourage horseplay and running around the pool.
- Make sure any pool or spa you use is clean, in good working order, and has safety approved drains.

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Check which applies to your home:

- There are currently **NO** swimming pools on my property, as defined by this agreement.
- As of _____ there **ARE** currently one or more swimming pools on my property, as defined by this agreement, and they include:

Type of Swimming Pool	Above or In-ground <i>(check which applies)</i>	Safety Mechanisms
	<input type="checkbox"/> In ground, permanently installed <input type="checkbox"/> Above ground, portable or removeable; more than 4 inches	
	<input type="checkbox"/> In ground, permanently installed <input type="checkbox"/> Above ground, portable or removeable; more than 4 inches	
	<input type="checkbox"/> In ground, permanently installed <input type="checkbox"/> Above ground, portable or removeable; more than 4 inches	

I am aware and fully understand that if I am caring for any child in the foster care system, my swimming pool must meet, at minimum, the Safety Requirements outlined in the Swimming Pool Policy. Specifically, I understand that a swimming pool must either be:

- Surrounded by a secure fence no less than five feet in height, without gaps that exceed 4 inches (and 2 inches from the ground), secured by a self-latching lock, and designed in such a way that the gate and fence do not obscure seeing the pool in any way and that climbing would be difficult;
- or –
- Secured by a locked cover that meets all of the performance standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

I am also aware and fully understand that I am never to allow a foster child in my care to use **ANY** swimming pool without direct adult supervision at the pool, either by me or by another responsible adult who has the ability to swim, is CPR/first aid certified, and has a valid water safety certificate.

Signature of Resource Parent 1

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Resource Parent 2

Printed Name

Date