

Introduction

Each year nearly 8,000 people are victims of drowning in the United States alone and more than 80,000 near-drownings occur yearly in which victims are severely injured, sometimes suffering permanent brain damage or paralysis. It is estimated that 70% of all 4th grade students do not know how to swim. Yet, at this age, boys and girls are physically, mentally, and emotionally receptive to group swimming lessons. Once children learn to swim, they enjoy years of safety in and around water while at the same time practicing the finest of physical fitness activities.

Unfortunately, there are many schools and communities that don't have a "learn to swim and water safety" program, and consequently, many children are growing up not learning this valuable skill. To help combat this, member clubs of the K-family—Kiwanis, Key Club, and Circle K International—are sponsoring this program in order to make all clubs in their organizations aware of the problem. Through this program it is hoped that more communities and schools will develop and continue a "learn to swim" program. The results will hopefully be a reduction in the number of unnecessary and unfortunate drownings that occur each year.

What Is It?

The Every Child A Swimmer program is a "learn-to-swim and water safety" project sponsored by Kiwanis International and its two sponsored youth organizations, Key Club International and Circle K International. Every Child A Swimmer is a tested and proven program, recognized by the International Swimming Hall of Fame. But it's not meant to replace Red Cross, Y or city recreation department programs. It's designed to supplement and work alongside these organizations. It is a program utilizing a station method to teach groups of children how to swim.

ECAS works like this: Kiwanis members act as organizers, contacting and coordinating school administrators, raising funds and publicizing the program. Key Club members and other high school students serve as volunteer in-the-water trainers in conjunction with a certified swimming instructor.

The ideal way to implement ECAS is to make it part of mandatory elementary school curriculums. If school arrangements are delayed, the program can be co-sponsored with other organizations such as the Red Cross, Boys Club or Y, or even run independently by Kiwanis.

After co-sponsors have been arranged and pool facilities located, the next step is to find a trained swimming instructor. You will probably find one through your local Red Cross, YWCA, YMCA, Swim America, Jewish Community Center, City Parks and

Recreation Department, Scouting or Boys Club organizations. Another good source is the National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association of America.

The swim instructor may use any accredited station teaching method, modifying the program to his/her own teaching style.

The involvement of K-family members in this program should take on the form of volunteers and assistants. They are not expected to take any responsibilities of actually teaching children how to swim. This should be handled only by certified instructors. Volunteers would serve as "in-water" assistants to these instructors. Teaching thorough safety rules is emphasized in all ECAS programs.

Who Is It for?

This program is directed specifically towards teaching children to swim not later than the 4th grade. Experience shows that generally children 8-10 years old are the most receptive to swimming lessons. They generally do not have a fear of the water and are able to comprehend the lessons being taught in each station.

This program should be incorporated in the physical education curriculum of all students by the time they leave the 4th grade level. By doing this, it will assure that all students know how to swim and be capable of saving their own lives (if the need arises). Obviously, incorporating such a program in the school's curriculum will require the support of the school superintendent and principal. These two individuals will play a major role in determining the ultimate success of this program.

Answers to questions often asked.

1. How can our club get the ball rolling?

- First, select a person or persons to meet with local school officials, to discuss making ECAS a part of their elementary school curriculum. Kiwanians then become liaisons between private and public educational sectors, and various other certified programs in the area.
- Second, find a pool that is available for the lessons; if not one located on school property, then possibly a city or county-owned pool. If you coordinate the program with your local Red Cross, Y Club or Boys' Club, you might use their facilities. Another option is to utilize a portable pool.
- You will need to acquire a certified swimming instructor.
- Finally, you will advertise for financial and volunteer support in the schools and in local media.

2. How many members of my group will need to be involved?

- A committee of six to eight people should be assigned to the project, according to its size and scope. You will need volunteers for administration, publicity, and possibly for transportation of some children to and from the lessons.

3. How much will it cost?

- Possible costs involved are for the swim instructor, pool rental, swimsuits and caps, ear plugs, towels, sunscreen, pool safety equipment, transportation, and certificates for achievement awards.

4. How can the Every Child A Swimmer organization help us get started?

- ECAS will provide public service announcements for local television; ideas for merit awards, decals, and patches; literature to help trainers and guide your swim instructor; and ECAS will put you in touch with other organizations that can help coordinate and support your program.

5. Should our club have concerns about liability?

- That's another good reason for co-sponsoring the program with a school or other organization in your community, which already has liability insurance in place for sports and other activities involving children. In fact, they will probably welcome this opportunity. A school's liability might be much greater if such a life-saving program was available, but it chose not to participate. The ECAS Program is an eligible project for Kiwanis International's General Liability Insurance. Please contact their Risk Management Department.

What are the benefits?

Obviously, the direct benefit of this program is to the children that learn to swim through it. They will continue in life knowing how to swim and enjoy being in and around the water.

However, there is another beneficiary of this program and that is the local community. This should be viewed as another community benefit program that is partially sponsored by the city. This helps to develop goodwill and good public relations for the city and our organizations. Make sure this point is made to the mayor or appropriate councilmen. With the cooperation from the city, school officials and the manpower from your club this program can be a great success and benefit to all.

For Further Information

If you feel that this program is needed in your community and you think your club can sponsor it, begin now to organize it. If you need additional information, write to:

**Every Child A Swimmer, Inc.
One Hall of Fame Drive
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316**

Every Child A Swimmer, Inc. can provide you with additional promotional materials and video tapes as well as specific suggestions on how to implement the program.

"The Every Child A Swimmer Program, working with other community organizations such as Kiwanis, Key Club, Circle K and others, has the potential to stop this needless loss of innocent life."

W. J. BLECHMAN, M.D.
President
Kiwanis International 1990-1991

"In spite of the fact that North America and the Caribbean are brimming over with swimming pools, lakes, and beaches, and many inexpensive lessons available to young people, there is an over-whelming and senseless loss of life each year.

All drownings are unnecessary! Most of them can be prevented by the teaching of swimming and the best ages for learning to swim are 8 to 10 years, or 4th grade students."

ART LINKLETTER

"I am amazed that someone hasn't put this project together before. The ECAS Project sponsored by Kiwanis meets a need for educating our children that has been ignored for too long."

JACK W. NELSON
Former Head Coach
U.S. Olympic Women's Swimming Team

"It is with extreme pleasure the CSCAA lends its complete support to the Every Child A Swimmer Program. It is one of the most important yet virtually ignored programs in this country. Year after year countless children drown. This is such a vital and unnecessary loss to our society."

PENNY LEE DEAN, President
ART SOLOW, Secretary-Treasurer
College Swimming Coaches Association of America Inc.

"As you know, the nature and content of elementary school programs are decided by state and local officials and parents. But using volunteer efforts to promote the safety of our children is in the best American tradition. I wish you success implementing 'Every Child A Swimmer,' and progress in the coming years."

WILLIAM J. BENNETT
Former Secretary
United States Department of Education

"ECAS is a multi-purpose program designed to teach basic swimming and water safety techniques as part of the on-going physical education curriculum in all elementary schools. It is adaptable to all grades and ages; and the benefits are almost immediate. It not only builds health, generates fun and excitement and gives the students a sport they can enjoy for life, but also saves lives . . . nine out of ten drownings occur within six feet of safety. The primary cause of death? The victims 'fell in.' The most frequent place of death? 'Canals and pools.' Graduates of the first four stations of the ECAS program can swim 27 ft., and that can often mean the difference between life and death."

BILL SIMONS
Former President
The International Swimming Hall of Fame

"The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports shares the conviction that every child should learn to swim at an early age. Swimming is our most popular participant sport and much more as well: an important safety measure, a valuable social skill, and a practical and pleasurable means of maintaining vigorous good health. We are pleased to join in urging schools to adopt the 'Every Child A Swimmer' program."

C. CARSON CONRAD
Executive Director
President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

"We wholeheartedly support the principle of having swimming and water safety instruction in the curriculum of public and private schools, especially in the elementary schools."

ORIN MYERS
National Director
Water Safety Program
American Red Cross

"The 'Every Child A Swimmer' program is a great idea and I hope it can be accomplished. This would unquestionably become a great service to the youth of the country."

MIKE PEPPE
Ohio State University
Swim Coach

"Many sports activities cannot be pursued throughout life: football, basketball and gymnastics are examples of those kinds of activities. Swimming offers the greatest carry-over value of any of the sports activities."

JAMES E. COUNSILMAN, Ph.D.
Swimming Coach and Professor of Physical Education
Founding President, International Swimming Hall of Fame

"Your program to make every child a swimmer addresses the essential topic of effective development of health and safety knowledge for all students. In this sense, your program supports the all important principle of educational advancement and equality of opportunity. Therefore, we are delighted to encourage local boards of education to review and study the potential value of the activities offered by your program toward the attainment of the local educational objectives that they establish for their students."

THOMAS A. SHANNON
Executive Director
National School Boards Association

"I'm very impressed by and supportive of the 'Every Child A Swimmer' program. Saving a young life is the most important thing we can do because their future is our future. Among the thousands of young lives lost every year are potential doctors, lawyers, scientists and leaders of our country. We must do everything possible to reduce that loss."

DR. RON O'BRIEN
U.S. Olympic Diving Coach



Every Child A Swimmer

- Is Fun
- Builds Health
- Saves Lives

**A special program of
Kiwanis International
Key Club International
and
Circle K International
for elementary schools**

Recognized by the International Swimming Hall of Fame

