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According to the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages one to four. There are several methods of protection one can use to prevent drowning incidents. No single strategy is likely to prevent drowning deaths and injuries.

Touch supervision is the most effective way to protect children. The supervising adult should be in the water *“within an arms length”* providing touch supervision at all times. Young children often make little to no noise when they fall into water. They are also hard to see below the water surface. Parents and caregivers should never leave children alone, not even for a moment.

Another way to protect children from drowning is to remove all toys and floats from water after use. This may reduce a child’s temptation to reach for them. Also, waist and arm floats should not be substituted for approved life vests. If possible, install pool fencing, water entry alarms, and door locks to reduce the risk of children wandering and falling into the pool unsupervised.

Most drowning incidents occur in residential pools, but children can also drown in ponds, wading pools, bathtubs, and even buckets. Drowning deaths typically occur when the parent or caregiver is engaged in distracting activities. Talking on the phone, socializing with friends, and doing household chores can distract an adult from supervising children who are in or near water.

Children can drown in a matter of seconds. *Keep your kids at arms length* by providing touch supervision.

For materials on drowning prevention, please contact Amie Wach at 595-6506.