



# Keeping Kids Safe & Healthy During the Summer Months

The last days of school are behind us, and carefree summer days are ahead! Kids make many positive childhood memories during the summer months. However, research shows that kids' activity levels have been decreasing during the summer months, resulting in extended sedentary time and increased weight gain. Many summer activities can also cause injuries, leading medical and public health professionals to call summer "trauma season." So how can

we keep kids active, safe, and healthy to create those great summer memories? Here are some summer safety tips to navigate this season's common yet unique dangers.

## **POOL SAFETY**

Swimming pools provide a welcome respite from summer heat. Unfortunately, every year children drown in pools. The most common reason for those drownings is a lack of



supervision by caregivers, either by leaving the children alone momentarily or being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, which impairs their ability to supervise or intervene appropriately. Children should never be left unsupervised in pools, not even momentarily, as young children can drown within 25 seconds.

You can ensure safety in the pool by having an assigned “watcher” at all times. A good way to do this (especially if this duty will be passed off between adults) is to make a laminated “watcher” card to identify the person charged with that responsibility. Whenever the watcher needs to step away (even for a moment), they should pass that card/responsibility to another responsible adult until they return. The responsible adult/watcher should refrain from using alcohol or drugs.

When allowing your children to swim at a friend’s house, ask the adults how they plan to supervise children in the pool appropriately. Consider staying with your child to assist with watching the children.

## WINDOW SAFETY

When the weather warms, windows are open more often. Alas, this means increased injuries children suffer from falling out of windows. Here are a few tips to keep children safe around open windows:

- ▶ Don’t rely on screens. Screens cannot withstand the weight of children pushing or leaning on them.
- ▶ Install child safety window guards. Use ones with an emergency release device, so they can be removed easily in case of a fire.
- ▶ Install window stops. This allows windows to open only a few inches.
- ▶ Keep beds and other items children climb on away from windows. A child bouncing on a bed could fall against an open window screen, which cannot withstand the force.
- ▶ Always supervise young children around open windows.



## HOME ALONE

Once summer arrives, many parents and caregivers want to look to the law to help decide when their child can be left home alone. In fact, there is no “legal age” when a child can, or should, be left alone. The right answer varies from child to child. The key factor is your child’s ability to keep themselves safe when alone.

### Here are some things to consider when making this important decision:

**Age and maturity.** How has your child shown responsibility in the past? Is your child able to care for themselves? Does your child obey rules and make good decisions?

**Your child’s feelings.** How comfortable is your child with being alone? Is your child afraid?

**Time.** How long will your child be alone? Will it be during the day or evening? During a mealtime or bedtime?

**Other children.** How many children will be in the home without an adult? How do the children get along? Is the older child able to care for younger ones?

**Safety.** How safe is your neighborhood? Do you have a plan for emergencies? Does your child know their address, phone number, and how to call 911 if needed? Can your child contact you at all times while you are away? Who else is available to help in an emergency (a neighbor, for example).

### If you have decided your child is ready to stay home alone, here are some suggestions:

**Start with a trial period.** Leave your child alone for a short time while you are nearby and see how they manage. If your child has never been left alone before, be mindful when selecting the best time to try it, perhaps while you run a quick errand or two. You know your child and family, so you need to determine what will work best.





**Role play.** Act out possible situations to help your child learn what to do. A good example would be acting out a scenario where someone comes to the door or calls when your child is left alone. This will prepare them to deal with unplanned events.

**Establish rules.** Make sure your child knows what is and is not allowed when you are not home. Many parents find that having a chore list to keep kids busy is a good strategy.

**Check in.** Call your child while you are gone or have a friend stop by to check on your child.

**Talk about your child's feelings.** Encourage your child to share their feelings about staying home alone and address any concerns.

**Don't overdo it.** Even a mature, responsible child should not be alone too long or too often. Consider community centers or church activities to keep your child busy and supervised when you are away from home.

**Have emergency phone numbers easily accessible.** Show your child where the phone numbers are. The numbers of the local police and fire departments are good ones to have on hand.

**As a neighbor, you may be concerned about children left alone over the summer. Here are some tips from PFSA's Front Porch Project®:**

**Establish a relationship with the child and parents,** if you don't already know them. Plan get-togethers so people get to know each other.

**If appropriate, offer to be the emergency person** a child can call or go to if they need help.

**Ask a child to help you with a yard project or join your family in an activity.** Check with the child's parents first, of course, and be creative with ways to interact with neighborhood kids.

**Tell parents about community programs** they may not have heard about or considered previously.

**Keep an eye out for all the children in your neighborhood.** Have an open dialogue with parents and older children if you are concerned. This is also how you can offer kudos to parents when kids do positive things!



**When school closes for the summer, fewer people may be looking out for a child's safety. Becoming aware of the children around you and making a commitment to get to know your neighbors can go a long way toward keeping kids safe — no matter what time of year it is.**

# Welcome

TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**Join us in welcoming six new members to our Board!**

We are excited and grateful to have this group of individuals join the Board and bring their unique talents, expertise, and perspectives to PFSA to further our vision for all children to grow and thrive free from abuse and neglect. Welcome!



**RON BUNCE**  
President & CEO  
Children's Home of York



**KARA FINCK**  
Practice Professor of Law  
Penn Law School



**MARK HOLMAN**  
Director of Human Resources  
Susquehanna Township  
School District



**DR. ROSALIND LEE**  
Regional Director  
of Pennsylvania Operations  
Progressive Life Center, Inc.



**PAMELA SZAJNUK**  
Chief Financial Officer  
County Commissioners  
Association of Pennsylvania



**JIM WILLSHIER**  
Chief Public Affairs Officer  
Pennsylvania Coalition  
Against Rape



## CBCAP MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

# Centre County Youth Service Bureau

PFSA would like to give a shoutout to **Centre County Youth Service Bureau** as a valued member of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Network!

Centre County Youth Service Bureau exists to help ensure children, youth, and families have every opportunity to reach their full potential. The Youth Service Bureau has 12 different programs that serve kids, prenatal through age 21, and their families. These programs provide group home housing, runaway shelter services, transitional housing, 24/7 hotline response, family conferencing, drug and alcohol prevention services, mentoring, family intervention, and reunification services.

Thank you for all you do to support children and families!

To learn more about Centre County Youth Service Bureau, visit their website at [ccysb.com](https://ccysb.com).

# PA Child Abuse PREVENTION SYMPOSIUM

SEPT  
14

REGISTER  
ONLINE AT  
[PAFSA.ORG](https://PAFSA.ORG)

*Click Here  
to Register*

The PA Child Abuse Prevention Symposium will be held virtually on September 14, 2022.

Presentations will include a variety of topics relevant to professionals and organizations that provide programs to children. Please join us for this valuable training offered to support PFSA's core mission — to promote child abuse awareness and prevention.

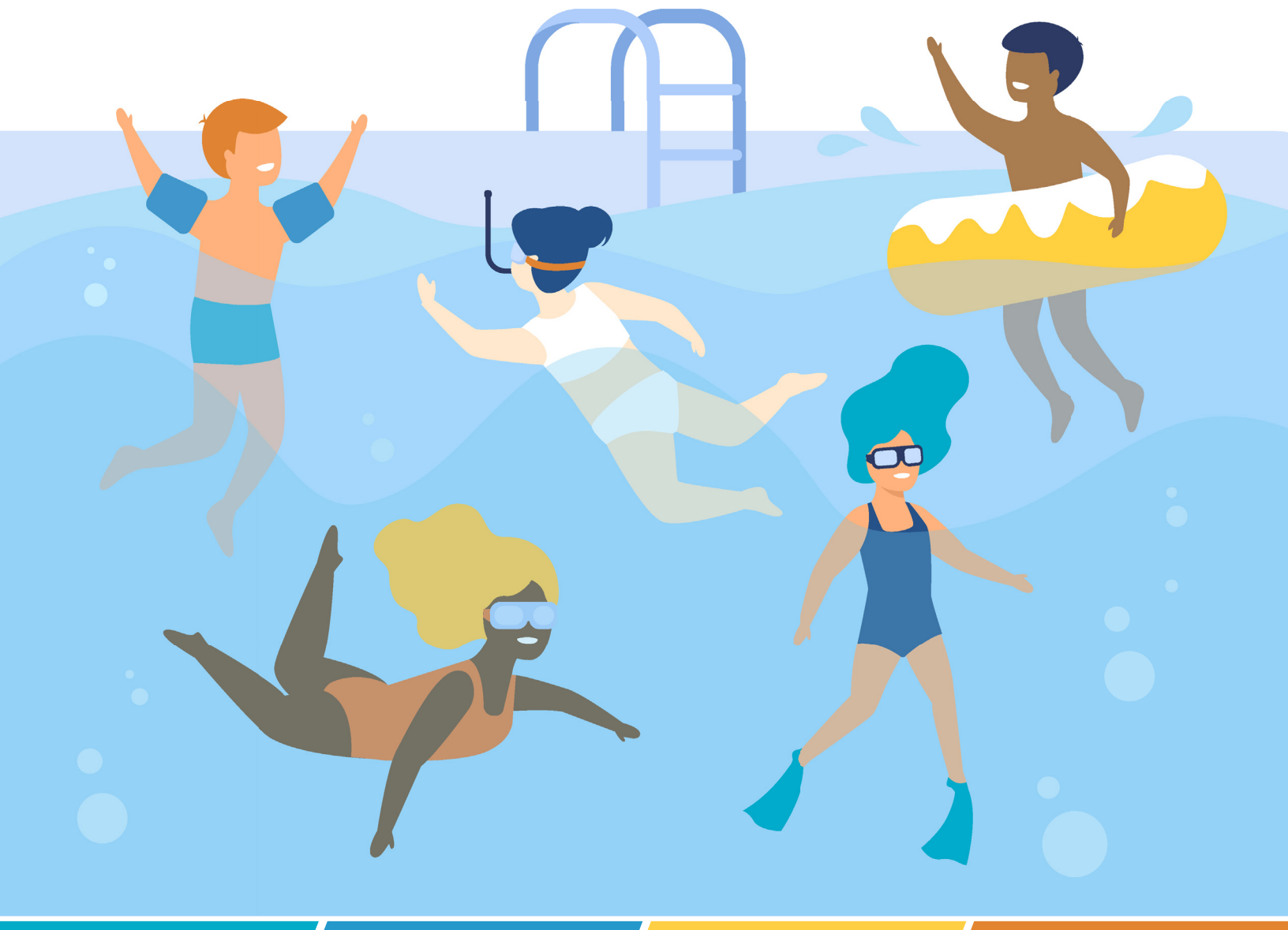
All registrations include  
CEUs, CLEs, Act 48 credits



# #ProtectPAKids

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Help us to support the families and communities across Pennsylvania by donating to PFSA today. Your gift will help PFSA continue to deliver successful training, education, and ongoing support to PA families and children. Visit [pafsa.org](https://pafsa.org) to learn more and donate!



# UPCOMING PFSA TRAININGS

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## Families in Recovery New Facilitator Training

This research-based program is a great resource for parents, guardians, and caretakers recovering from substance use disorder. The program aims to teach healthy coping and parenting skills while balancing the needs of recovery.

New facilitators of the Families in Recovery (FiR) program will be fully prepared to implement the program and provide training after attending a two-day comprehensive session consisting of content, education, and application instruction of the curriculum. FiR facilitators come together to share program implementation experience, ideas, and insights following initial training.

All organizations interested in implementing the Families in Recovery program are required to enter an agreement contract with PFSA and participate in the evaluation requirements of the program. FiR contracts include ongoing technical assistance, program development, facilitator calls, and assistance with data collection procedures.

**Dates:** October 12 & 13, 2022 (*virtual*)

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
(*half-hour lunch break*)

**Cost:** Program costs have recently changed. Please contact Justin Donofrio, Program Services Manager, at [jdonofrio@pafsa.org](mailto:jdonofrio@pafsa.org) for details regarding contracts and costs.

## Mandated Reporter Training

PFSA has several options for mandated reporter training for staff and volunteers. Certificates are provided to the participants, and upon request, we will upload confirmation of your training to the Department of State or Education for CE fulfillments under Act 31 and/or Act 48. CLEs are also available for attorneys.

### LIVE IN-PERSON/VIRTUAL

**Cost:** Free

**How to register:** Find and register for a virtual session here: [pafsa.org/mandated-reporter-training](https://pafsa.org/mandated-reporter-training)

### INDIVIDUAL ONLINE, ON-DEMAND

**Cost:** \$30

**Take anytime:** [pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training](https://pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training)

### TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

This is an opportunity for organizations to develop their own quality, cost-efficient, in-house training program for employees on child abuse recognition and reporting.

**Dates:** July 19 & 20, 2022 (*virtual*)  
September 20 & 21, 2022 (*virtual*)  
November 9 & 10, 2022 (*virtual*)

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
(*half-hour lunch break*)

**Cost:** \$1,000 per trainer entering into a three-year contract with PFSA

**How to register:** You must preregister for this training. Email Haven Evans, Director of Programs, at [hevans@pafsa.org](mailto:hevans@pafsa.org) for the paperwork or to ask any questions.