



May 4, 2020

RE: Public Health Need to Open Swim Schools and Learn-to-Swim Programs

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to ask you to consider the serious public health need to open swim schools and learn-to-swim programs in the next stage of businesses to reopen.

Learning to swim is a life-or-death skill, essential for every child. Formal swim lessons between ages 1 and 4 can help reduce the risk of drowning by 88% according to a study conducted in 2009.<sup>1</sup> Drowning is the number one cause of death for children ages 1 to 4 and a leading cause for young people up to 14 years of age.<sup>2</sup> We believe drowning to be at an even higher risk now as the schools, daycares and other children's activities are currently closed. This gives children more time to find a body of water such as a backyard pool, neighbor's pool, community pool, inflatable pool, sink, toilet, filled bathtub, bucket, ditches filled with rainwater, ocean, lakes, and rivers. A young child can drown in less than 2 inches of water.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, parents have even more distractions than ever, including remote working while children are home and are unable to supervise their children at all times. Even before this pandemic, 9 out of 10 child related drowning deaths happened when a caregiver was supervising.<sup>4</sup> 69% of children who drowned were not expected to be at or in the pool, yet they were found in the water and 77% of drowning victims had been out of sight for less than five minutes.<sup>5</sup>

Private swim schools across the country educate over 250,000 children per week to learn to swim and unlike public pools, our programs are controlled learning environments. We understand that modifications will need to be put in place once swim schools/learn-to-swim programs reopen. While an instructor needs to stay within a reachable distance from a nonswimmer, we are committed to taking concrete steps to ensure social distancing within all other aspects of our facilities.

There is no way to teach water survival or swim skills remotely, and the health risk from COVID-19 in instructional swim settings should be very low. According to the CDC, the chlorine/bromine in our swimming pools should inactivate the virus in the water. Chlorine/bromine is a disinfectant. There is no evidence that the

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<sup>1</sup> Association Between Swimming Lessons and Drowning in Childhood, A Case-Control Study: Ruth Brenner, et al., 2009 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4151293/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/campaigns/drowning-prevention/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> [https://downloads.aap.org/DOPA/Drowning-Prevention/is\\_your\\_baby\\_crawling\\_english.pdf](https://downloads.aap.org/DOPA/Drowning-Prevention/is_your_baby_crawling_english.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Research from National SAFEKIDS campaign, <https://www.cnn.com/2004/HEALTH/05/27/drowning/>

<sup>5</sup> Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) <https://www.momsteam.com/sports/swimming/safety/grim-statistics-on-child-drownings>

virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to people through the water in pools. The industry is working to establish best practices, and we are willing to engage in a science-based dialogue with health officials regarding which measures would be appropriate for learn-to-swim programs.

We hope you will agree that teaching swimming is essential to keeping our children safe. If you have any questions, we would be more than happy to answer them, please contact Lisa Zarda, executive director for the United States Swim School Association at [lisa@usswimschools.org](mailto:lisa@usswimschools.org) or 480-447-4987. We look forward to working together to reduce the risks to our children and communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

### Signatories

Lisa M. Zarda, CAE  
Executive Director  
United States Swim School Association

Adam B. Katchmarchi, Ph.D., EMT-B  
Executive Director  
National Drowning Prevention Alliance

Sabeena Hickman, CAE  
President & CEO  
Pool & Hot Tub Alliance

Jim Spiers  
President  
Stop Drowning Now

Christy Bostic  
Executive Director  
Hope Floats Foundation

5 Cities Swim School-Arroyo Grande, CA  
7C's Swim School-Bothell, WA  
Abc Aquatics-Chino, CA  
Academy Swim Club-Valencia & Newhall, CA  
AcroSports Swimming-Friendswood & League City, TX  
All Star Swim Academy-Henderson, NV  
Alligator Steps Swim School-Clayton, Smithfield, Goldsboro, & Wendell, NC  
America's Kids Swim School-Clovis, CA  
American Kids Sports Center-Bakersfield, CA  
American Swim Academy-Fremont, Newark, Livermore, Dublin, Walnut Creek, CA  
Annette's Swim School-Boca Raton, FL  
Aqua April-League City, TX  
Aqua Beba Swim, Brooklyn, NY  
Aqua Pros Swim School-San Diego, CA  
AQua Wave Swim School-Foothill Ranch, CA  
AquaKids-Palmetto Bay, FL  
Aquatic Adventures-Roanoke, VA  
Australian Swim Schools Inc.-Tarzana, Fullerton, Fountain Valley, & Santa Ana, CA  
AVAC Swim School-San Jose, CA  
Bitty Bubbles Swim School-Panama City, FL  
Blue Buoy Swim School-Tustin, CA  
Born 2 Swim Aquatic Academy-Miami, FL  
British Swim School-Frisco, Plano, Rowlett, TX

British Swim School - Coral Springs-Coral Springs, Parkland and Tamarac, FL  
British Swim School - East Valley-Gilbert, Mesa, & San Tan Valley, AZ  
British Swim School Bay Area-Millbrae, South San Francisco, & Richmond, CA  
British Swim School DuPage-Naperville; Glendale Heights; Carol Stream, Bolingbrook; Oswego; & South Elgin, IL  
British Swim School Hudson Waterfront-Jersey City, Bayonne, Secaucus, & Weehawken, NJ  
British Swim School of Vancouver-Vancouver, WA  
Cal Elite Kids-Rancho Santa Margarita, CA  
CELTs Swim School-Matteson, Orland Park, Country Club Hills, Burr Ridge, Lyons, Crestwood, Chicago, Calumet City, Arlington Heights, Downers Grove, & Lemont, IL  
Chicago Swim School-Arlington Heights, & Mokena, IL  
Coach Eve Learn To Swim-Matteson, Chicago, Hillcrest, Harvey, Calumet City, Willow Brook, Lyons, Lemont, Oak Brook, Naperville, Carol Streams, Glen Ellyn, Arlington Heights, Wheeling, & Orland, IL  
Daland Swim School-Thousand Oaks, CA  
Deep Blue Swim School-Long Beach, CA  
DeMont Family Swim School-Tucson, AZ  
Discover Aquatics-Olympia, WA  
DoFUN SWIM Academy-Portland, OR  
Dolphin Swim Academy-Madison, WI  
Dolphin Swim Club-Loves Park & Crystal Lake, IL  
Education for all squid school-Osakis, MN  
Evolution Swim Academy-Mission Viejo, Ladera Ranch, Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, & Rancho Mission Viejo, CA  
Fast Track Swimming-Tomball, TX  
Fish Tails Swim School-Stuart, FL  
Florida Swim School-Boca Raton, FL  
Houston Swim Club Pearland & Cypress-Pearland & Houston, TX  
iheartswimming-Tustin, CA  
Inglis Swim School-Austin, TX  
Jamie's School of Fish-Clovis & Fresno, CA  
Just Swim Inc.-Cooper City, FL  
Karen's Aquatics-Sierra Vista, AZ  
Kids 1st Swim School-Palm Beach Gardens, Jupiter, North Palm Beach, & Wellington, FL  
Kids First Swim School Springfield-Springfield, VA  
Kswim Schools-Los Angeles, CA  
La Petite Baleen-San Francisco, San Bruno, Half Moon Bay, & Redwood City, CA  
Lafayette Swim America-Lafayette, IN  
Las Vegas Swim Academy-Las Vegas, NV  
Leaps & Bounds Sports Center-Denham Springs, LA  
LetSwim Inc-Aldie, VA  
Little Fins Swim Academy-New Orleans, LA  
Little Flippers Swim School-Natick & Winchester, MA  
Little One's Swim-Reno, NV  
Little Otter Swim School-Charlotte, NC  
Little Swimmers-Miami & Homestead, FL  
Little Waves Family Swim School-Omaha, NE  
Little Whale Swim School-Sacramento, CA  
Lori's H2O Skills-Milford, OH  
Love Swimming Swim School-New Orleans, LA  
Lulú Cisneros Educación Acuática-Monterrey, México  
Lynnhaven Dive Center & Swim School-Virginia Beach, VA  
Maley Swim School-Ridgeland, MS  
Marlin School of Swimming-Richland, WA  
MarTar Swim School-Baltimore, MD & Charleston, SC

Miller Swim School-Tulsa & Jenks, OK  
Ocaquatics Swim School-Miami, Coral Gables, & Hialeah Gardens, FL  
Physique Swimming-New York, NY  
Pods Swimming-East Providence, RI  
Premier Aquatics-Aliso Viejo, Irvine, Mission Viejo, & Laguna Beach, CA  
Premier Swim Academy-Rancho Cucamonga, CA  
PRO Swim Academy-Elk Grove Village, IL  
Propel Swim Academy-South Riding, VA  
Quality Swimming-Coconut Creek, & Boca Raton, FL  
Rogue Aquatics-Medford, OR  
Saf-T-Swim-Long Island, NY  
Salem Gymnastics & Swim-Winston-Salem, NC  
Seal Swim School-Lutz, Riverview, Tampa, Wesley Chapel, FL  
Shepard Swim School-Elkhart, IN  
Sherman Swim School-Lafayette, CA  
Silver Bear Swim School-Reno & Sparks, NV & Truckee, CA  
Small Fish Big Fish Swim School-West Palm Beach, FL  
Smart Fish Academy-Cypress, CA  
Speer Swim School-Broomall, PA  
Splash Swim School-San Ramon & Walnut Creek, CA  
Stony Creek Swim Center-Noblesville, IN  
Summer's Swim Academy-League City, TX  
Sun Country Sports Center-Jonesville, FL  
Survival Swim School of the Brazos Valley-Bryan, TX  
Sutton Swim School-Campbell, CA  
Sweet Blue Swim Academy-Greenwich, CT & Stamford, CT  
Swim Consultant-Boca Raton, FL  
Swim Float Swim!-Longmont, CO  
Swim Gym Swim School-Miami, FL  
Swim to Shore-Murrieta, CA  
Swim Tutors USA-Naples & Bonita Springs, FL  
SwimAmerica-Davis-Davis, CA  
SWIMBABES-Milwaukie, OR  
Swimhaus Swim School-Gilbert, AZ  
SwimJim-New York, NY & Houston, TX  
SwimKids Swim Schools-Woodbridge, Gainesville, Leesburg, & Fredericksburg, VA  
SWIMkids USA, Inc.-Mesa, Arizona & Chandler AZ  
Swimmerman Swim School-Atlanta, Jonesboro, & Stockbridge, GA  
Swimming Safari Swim School-Jacksonville, FL  
Swimming Safari Swimming School-Jacksonville, FL  
SwimSRQ-Sarasota, FL  
Texas Swim Academy-Katy, TX  
The Swim Center-Stockbridge, GA  
Water You Wading For-Chicago, Oak Lawn, & Evergreen Park, IL  
Watersafe Swim School-Seal Beach & Los Alamitos, CA  
WaterSprites Swim School-Chico, CA  
Waterworks Aquatics-Huntington Beach, Irvine, Carlsbad, San Jose, Pasadena, & Sierra Madre, CA & Highlands Ranch, CO  
Westside Aquatics-Los Angeles, CA  
Wings Over Water, Brewster, NY & Fairfield, CT  
Wisconsin Swim Academy-Appleton, WI