



Safe and Splashy!

Classroom Guide

Water is fun when you know the rules that keep you safe

CASEL Competency: Responsible Decision-Making

Grade Level: Pre-K–2

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Category: Safety Magic

Learning Objectives

- Learn the buddy system — never swim alone, always with a partner
- Understand that a grown-up must be watching BEFORE you enter the water
- Know the difference between safe water (pool with lifeguard) and risky water (pond, river)
- Practice "Reach, Throw, Don't Go" — how to help without jumping in

Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Buddy system • Lifeguard • Depth • Float • Safe • Rules • Swimming • Shallow • Deep • Rescue

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Blue fabric or paper for "water"
- Pool noodle or rope (for throw practice)
- Life jacket (for show)
- Paper and crayons

Before Reading

Connection Question

| *What's your favorite thing about water? What rules do you follow when you're near water?*

Background Building

Water is SO fun — splashing, swimming, floating! But water has rules. In this story, the hero learns them ALL: the buddy system (never swim alone), a grown-up must be watching, check the depth, know where it's safe. And the most important rescue rule: Reach, Throw, Don't Go — if someone is in trouble, reach with a stick, throw a flotation device, but NEVER jump in yourself.

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the hero learns about the buddy system** — A buddy is your safety partner! Why should you NEVER swim alone, even if you're a good swimmer?
- **When the hero checks for a lifeguard and a grown-up** — Before going in: is a grown-up watching? Is there a lifeguard? Why are these checks important?
- **When someone is in trouble and the hero remembers "Reach, Throw, Don't Go"** — The hero wants to help but can't jump in. Why? What should they do instead?

Discussion Questions

1. The buddy system means never swim alone. But what if your buddy is right there and you're a strong swimmer? Do you still need a buddy?

↳ What can a buddy do that you can't do for yourself?

2. "Reach, Throw, Don't Go" — why is jumping in to save someone actually DANGEROUS?

↳ What are things you can REACH with? What can you THROW?

3. A pool with a lifeguard is safer than a pond. Why? What makes water more or less safe?

↳ Can you think of water that looks safe but isn't?

4. The story says rules don't take away the fun — they PROTECT the fun. What does that mean?

↳ How do rules actually make swimming MORE fun, not less?

Facilitation Tips

Drowning is a leading cause of death for young children. This lesson is genuinely life-saving. Practice the physical components (reach, throw) with real objects. Make sure every child can verbalize the buddy system.

Emotional Payoff

Water transforms from scary-if-you-don't-know to fun-because-you-DO-know. Rules aren't restrictions — they're the keys that unlock safe water play. The hero becomes a "water safety expert" who can teach others.

After Reading Activities

Reach, Throw, Don't Go Practice

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Pool noodle, rope, cones for "water" boundary

Set up a pretend "water" zone with cones. One child pretends to be struggling (safely on land). Practice: REACH with a pool noodle. THROW a rope or flotation device. Call for help. NEVER cross the line into the "water." Repeat until automatic.

Buddy System Pairs

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Buddy bracelets or matching stickers

Pair up as swim buddies. Walk through a scenario: "You're at the pool. Before you go in, check: Where is your buddy? Where is the grown-up? Where is the lifeguard?" Practice the check-in routine.

Water Safety Poster

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Paper, crayons, markers

Create a "Water Safety Rules" poster with illustrations: 1. Buddy system. 2. Grown-up watching. 3. Check depth. 4. Reach, Throw, Don't Go. Display in the classroom.

Writing Prompts

- Draw yourself at the pool following all the safety rules. Label each one.
- Write the Reach, Throw, Don't Go steps. Why is each step important?
- Design a "Water Safety Expert" badge. What does someone need to know to earn it?

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we practiced water safety through "Safe and Splashy!" Your child learned the buddy system, the importance of grown-up supervision, and "Reach, Throw, Don't Go" — how to help someone in water trouble without putting themselves at risk. Please reinforce these rules before any water activities.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Before any water activity, practice the checklist: "Where's your buddy? Is a grown-up watching?"
- Practice Reach, Throw, Don't Go with a pool noodle in the yard
- Discuss: which bodies of water near your home are safe? Which need extra caution?

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- Flotsam by David Wiesner
- No Swimming for Nelly by Valeri Gorbachev
- Swimmy by Leo Lionni
- At the Beach by Roland Harvey