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What You Can Do To Keep Children with Autism in Your Community Safe This Summer

There are many devastating statistics that are well-circulated among parents and caregivers of children with autism. For example, one of the leading causes of death among children with autism is [drowning](#) and [50 percent of children with autism](#) will wander.

Because of these dangers, parents take many extra precautions. For example, they install multiple locks on the doors in their homes. They make sure their own pool gates are secure. And they install alarms on doors and gates.

But despite these efforts, a child with autism can still elope. And that's why it's so important for everyone in a community to look out for them. Here are a few ways you can help:

Secure pool fences and gates. In addition to having a tendency to wander, many children with autism are also fascinated by water. This is one factor that contributes to their high rate of drowning. As this list of tips from [SafeSoundFamily.com](#) on [keeping children with autism safe](#) recommends, pool gates should be self-closing and need to latch above a child's reach. If your pool

isn't properly secure, consider making these changes. It can be an incredibly important way to keep a child with autism safe.

Advocate for swimming programs for kids with special needs. Because the drowning risk for kids with autism is so high, learning to swim is vital. And as this guide on the [benefits of aquatic therapy for kids with ASD](#) notes, there are many other positives for children with autism when it comes to swimming. As the piece notes, it's great exercise for them. It helps them develop their motor skills and also has mental health benefits. Unfortunately, there are many communities that don't have swim programs for children with special needs. If this is the case in your area, consider advocating for or supporting drives to provide these programs at local recreational centers and community pools.

Let parents know you're available to help in an emergency. When a child wanders, the more people available to help find them the better. As this article from the Association for Science in Autism Treatment notes, ["trusted neighbors"](#) can be a huge help in these situations. That said, parents of children with autism may not want to impose by asking for your contact information or asking you to assist in a search. Don't make them ask. Let them know you're available to help if their child wanders and assure them that you'll always keep an eye out for their child's safety. Provide your contact information so that you can be easily contacted when they need your help.

It really does take a village. There's no better way to contribute to your community than by being an advocate for its children. Let the parents of children with autism in your neighborhood know that you'll do your part to help keep their child safe.

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