

# Float first

## **Float first lesson plan and activities**

### **Children: Under 5 years old**

This learning resource covers water safety educational content based on the need for child supervision in, on and around water. Children will explore the message to 'stay close' and learn about buoyancy as part of the *Float first* campaign. Activities include testing floating and sinking objects.

You can watch the [How to Float first video](https://dpanz.org.nz/float-first/#video) with your group.  
[dpanz.org.nz/float-first/#video](https://dpanz.org.nz/float-first/#video)

Supervision means:

- Constant visual contact by a competent adult
- Proximity: adults stay within arms' reach of children
- Without distraction e.g. mobile phones, cooking or other household chores, chatting to friends/family
- Being ready to respond

### **Learning outcomes:**

- Recognising some of the different water environments in Aotearoa, New Zealand.
- Identifying the different objects that will sink and float.
- Communicating the importance of 'staying close' to a responsible adult at all times when close to or in the water.
- Identifying the responsible people who can supervise them.
- Demonstrating a basic survival floating position

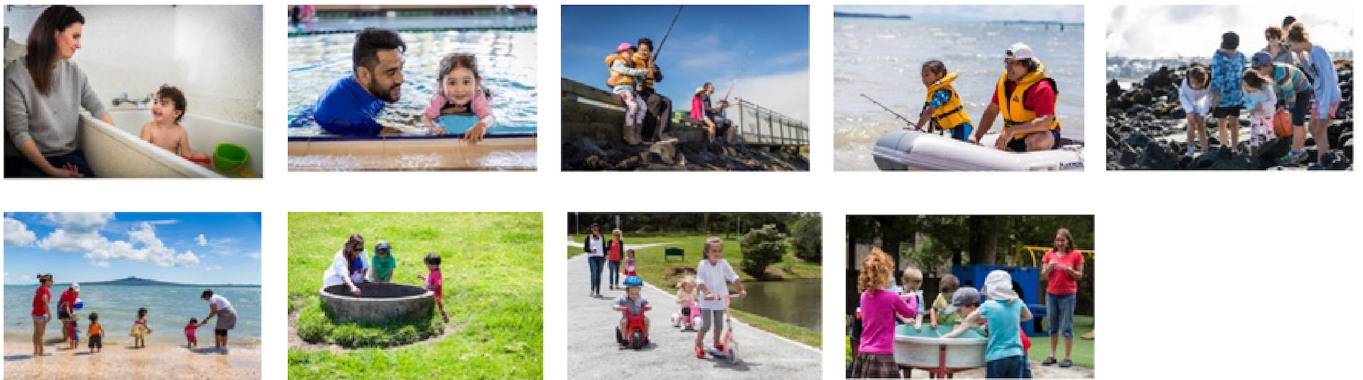
# Introduction

On World Drowning Prevention Day (25 July). People all over the world are getting together to learn about how to look after themselves and each other around water.

## Discussion

- Where do we find water?
- What are the fun things you and your whānau do in and around the water?

Use photos to prompt/reveal the different places we find water. Large format images are available at the end of this document.



## Q&A:

- What is the little girl doing in the bathroom?
- What are this family doing at the beach?
- What is the girl doing on the rocks?
- What do you think the child might do next?
- What do you think could happen if an adult is not close by?

Place the location images next to hoops on the floor/different corners of the room and ask children to stand in the one that they like best!

Sharing experiences and ideas:

- Share with someone else in your hoop why you chose this picture.
- What would you need to think about to keep yourself safe in the place you have chosen?
- What might the dangers be?



## **Stay close - adult supervision**

### **Discussion**

You should always have a parent/whānau member with you in or near the water. Use some of the water location images to generate discussion.

- Who do you need to stay close to?
- Who are the people that go with you for those activities? Brainstorm all the different people who go – confirm who are the responsible adults that can look after you e.g. parent, grandparent, uncle, aunty. – identify who these people are.
- Lifeguards and their role: Discuss their role at the beach and pool. Are they your responsible adult? Highlight that even if there is a lifeguard the children still need a parent/adult to be able to reach, hear and see them.

### **Asking permission**

Children need to ask and wait for a parent/whānau member before going in the water or playing near water. Adults are often busy doing different things. What might they be doing? How can you get their attention? What do you want to say to them?

Before you go in the water, ask yourself: Is an adult watching me? Can they see me? Can they reach me? Are they close enough to help me if I get into trouble?

Example scenario: You are waiting for your swimming lesson but are not in the water yet. Who is watching you? What could you say to them?

**Choose from these activities:**

**Activity 1 - Stay close drawing**

**Activity 2 - Beach ponder picture**

## **Sinking and floating**

### **Discussion**

What do you think these words mean: “sinking” and “floating”? Introduce “buoyancy” – a force that pushes objects up to keep them floating.

Choose from these activities to help the children to test whether different objects sink or float!

**Activity 3** – Objects that sink or float!

**Activity 4** - Floating and sinking with salt water

### **How do we float?**

Find out if any of the children can float and if someone can explain what it means.



Ask the students to lie down and demonstrate the different floating shapes that can help them to float on their back. Shapes: T, I, X, Y.

What is the best shape to help us when floating on our back? Why do you think that position helps us to float? Starfish or X shape can help to spread the body over a greater surface of water.

Can everyone float? Anyone can float but some may take a little longer to learn and will benefit from additional flotation or using gentle arm movements. Milk bottles can help when learning to float. Encourage them to try next time they are at the pool. Remembering that they should only enter the pool when a responsible adult is supervising.

Check out our learning and resources at the end of the document for eLearning modules.

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## Activities

Choose from the different activities to support the buoyancy and *Float first* learning.

### Activity 1 - Stay close

Children can draw an adult they can 'stay close' to when in the water or playing near water using the printable A4 Stay Close sheet. Arrange the drawings around the location photos on the wall as a reminder or take them home to share with the person you have drawn. Please feel free to share with DPA as well – we would love to see what you have been up to!

### Activity 2 - Beach picture (supervision)

Review the beach ponder picture with the children and use questions below to discuss and recap.

#### Discussion:

- Can you see any of the activities that we have talked about today in this picture? What are they?
- Can you see four parents who are looking after their children by staying close?
- Which adult is not doing a good job of staying close? Why? What are they doing?

#### Q&A

Imagine you are on this busy beach – what a lot of fun!

Q. What do you need to remember to do?

A. Stay close

Q. How can you check?

A. Ask: Is an adult watching me? Can an adult reach me?

### Activity 3 - Objects that sink and float

**Materials:** A variety of objects that will float or sink, a variety of balls of different sizes, a water table/large bucket.

#### Activity:

- Demonstrate floating and sinking and talk about what these words mean.
- Prediction - Children select objects – in groups, display objects they think will float/sink.
- Record prediction and discuss possible reasons.
- Test prediction – find out which objects float, which sink.
- Results: Record results - discuss. Why have some floated and some sunk?
- What do you think helped them float/sink?
- How can objects that float help people to float in the water? What items have the children used that can help them to float? What other flotation items have they seen?
- E.g. lifejackets, boogie boards, pool noodles, life rings.

**Teacher's note:** Buoyancy is a force that pushes up on objects, and the more surface area the object has for the force to push up on, the greater chance it will float and the more weight it will hold. In addition, more water is displaced when the surface area of an object is large.

## Activity 4 - Floating and sinking with salt water

This activity compares floating an egg in salt vs fresh water and provides an opportunity to make the link between sea water and fresh water (rivers, lakes).

Salt water is heavier than fresh (plain, unsalted) water. An egg can help you to prove this.

**Materials:** 2 glasses, 5 teaspoons of salt, 2 raw eggs, water

### Activity:

- Half fill the first glass with water
- Mix in 5 teaspoons of salt
- Make a prediction – will the egg float or sink?
- Gently place an egg in the salted water What happens to the egg? Does it float or sink?
- Fill the second glass with tap water
- Make a prediction – will the egg float or sink?
- Carefully place an egg in the fresh water. Does it float or sink?

**Teacher's note:** Salt water is denser than fresh water because of the salt content. There is more matter in an amount of salt water than there is in a similar amount of fresh water. The egg floats in the salt water, but not in the tap water because the egg is less dense than the salt water and denser than the fresh water.

**Results:** Children make a visual record of their experiment using drawings or photographs.



## ***Drowning prevention learning and resources***

### **How to Float first video**

Watch the [How to Float first video](#) to give everyone a good idea of what to do if they are in trouble in the water.

### **DPA Lifejacket Hubs (Auckland and Waikato)**

If any children need to borrow a lifejacket they can find their closest [DPA Lifejacket Hub](#). DPA also loan lifejackets to school and community groups.

### **FREE Online Water Safety Modules**

We have a free eLearning platform for all ages to learn more about how to stay safe around water. It covers a range of water-based activities. Check out our [eLearning platform](#). There are two modules for parents and caregivers of under-5s:

- [Early Childhood Water Safety](#) module covers the Layers of Protection that are essential for keeping young children safe in and around water.
- [Young Children Developing Water Competence](#) designed to guide parents and caregivers on how to teach their young children water competence

### **SPLASH Holiday Programme**

Check out our one day [school holiday programme](#) for 8-11 year olds!

### **Children's book**

Fishing with Papa is a water safety education teaching resource for early childhood featuring important water safety advice for both children and their caregivers. It is available in both English and te reo Māori.

[Fishing with Papa](#)

[Kei te hī ika māua ko Pāpā](#)

# *Stay Close*



