GUIDE FOR CHILDREN’S GROUP CHAPERONES

AQUATIC COMPLEX

Parc Jean-Drapeau
INTRODUCTION

An outing at the pool on these hot summer days is sure to be a fun time for participants and for you, as well. But there are always risks when you do water-related activities. While you can spend an enjoyable time with the participants, you always need to keep in mind that an accident can occur almost in the blink of an eye, and your main responsibility on these outings is to ensure the safety of the participants in your group and make them aware of how they, too, can contribute to a safe and pleasant outing.

The number of drownings is diminishing every year and this is due to several factors, including increased awareness of the need to adopt safety habits in a water-related setting. Another factor resulting in a reduction in the number of drownings is choosing a body of water that is monitored and regulated. By selecting Parc Jean-Drapeau for an outing, you are assured of having facilities that are monitored by trained, qualified people. Your role is also crucial in the smooth functioning of the day at the pool and, especially, for the safety of the participants in your charge. By making your participants and their parents aware of knowing how to swim, for example, you are helping to further reduce the number of drownings recorded in the province of Québec. Keeping participants safe is everyone’s business: managers, lifeguards-monitors, chaperones, etc. The Aquatic Complex’s lifeguards are trained and coached in being able to ensure the safety of pool users. As the chaperone for a group of participants, you have a greater knowledge of their characteristics (age, swimming ability, handicap, etc.) than Aquatic Complex employees. Thus, we believe it is of utmost importance that we work as a team to ensure your visit to our facilities unfolds smoothly and the participants are kept safe at all times. In this respect, we are providing this document, which serves as a guideline for everyone’s role and, most importantly, to explain how you will be tangibly contributing to the overall safety of the participants. It is essential that you have an awareness of what your responsibilities are as a chaperone.

This guide is based on the Guide for the Supervision of Aquatic Activities for Groups of Children, a document published in collaboration with the Lifesaving Society, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Leisure (MELS), the Québec Camps Association, the Canadian Red Cross, as well as on our own structural procedures at Parc Jean-Drapeau.
Your responsibilities as a chaperone

**BEFORE**

- Find out if children have taken a swimming lesson (when, level followed, certificate obtained). Subsequently, enter all the necessary information on the attendance sheet (need a lifejacket, special needs). (Appendix 5)

- Read the pools regulations and make sure the pool regulations are obeyed (Appendix 2)

- Please make sure you familiarize yourself with the swimming areas, the depth of the water, and the Aquatic Complex’s shade areas. (Appendix 6)

- Be aware of the chaperones’ role in terms of emergency measures (Appendix 3)

- Make sure you have the right ratio of child attendants before coming to the aquatic complex. (Appendix 1)

**DURING**

- On arrival, you must inform the lifeguard supervisor of the number of children and accompanying persons and the particularities of the group.

- You must discuss with the lifeguard supervisor the areas assigned to your group. You must ensure that your group complies with the regulations of the facility.

- You must give lifeguard supervisor how many lifejackets you need and ask for lifeguard for swimming tests

- Swimming test: Provide support to the lifeguards during swimming tests and take note of participants that need life jacket. (Appendix 4)

- You must help the lifeguards-monitors to put on the identification bracelets (Appendix 4)
You must assign the children to their chaperone. Make sure you’re comfortable with the ratio in effect. This is a minimum standard ratio; if you feel, depending on the characteristics of your group, that additional support is required in order to provide safe supervision, we recommend you increase your number of chaperones and inform Parc Jean-Drapeau prior to your visit. We realize the groups in your charge aren’t always the same. To determine the appropriate ratio, take each individual in your group into account. (Appendix 1)

The youngsters should be grouped by their swimming abilities (weak, average, strong).

Be in the water while your youngsters are in the water by conducting an active monitoring throughout the time they are swimming. (Appendix 7)

Inform your group leader if you have to leave, even if it’s only for a few minutes (this way, you will ensure that someone monitors your group with respect to the ratio).

If a participant is missing, immediately inform the closest lifeguard.

Make sure the participants requiring a life jacket wear it all day long.

Please make sure you take attendance throughout the day (Appendix 5)

Make sure you conduct a follow-up so that on your next visit to a body of water, you will know which ones require a life jacket.

Determine which aspects need to be changed or improved on for your next aquatic outing.

Provide your opinion, by taking the opportunity of writing your comments or suggestions following your outing at the Parc.
**Our responsibilities as lifeguards**

**BEFORE**
- The lifeguard supervisor prepares the arrival of the day camps (how many swimmers, prepare the safety jackets ...)

**DURING**
- Welcome you to your arrival at the aquatic complex and give you a definite place.
- Inform you about the facility’s regulations and make sure that you and the participants understand what this entails.
- Inform you of how to monitor participants and different monitoring techniques
- With your collaboration, conduct a swimming test early in the season and provide flotation devices.
- Conduct an active monitoring of your group and pool patrons.
- If required, administer the necessary treatments.

**AFTER**
- EVALUATING THE CHAPERONES’ MONITORING ABILITY
  Please note that the Société du Parc Jean-Drapeau in collaboration with the Lifesaving Society reserves the right to evaluate the ability of the children’s groups’ support system. Once this is done, feedback will be given to the person in charge of the group. Recommendations might be made to improve the monitoring. It may occur, based on the evaluation made by our team that a tighter ratio would be recommended for some of the groups.
Appendix 1: Ratio

Participants aged 5 and under with swimming ability lower than Junior 3

Monitoring: Chaperone does an active monitoring by constantly facing the body of water.

1 chaperone per 3 participants

Participants aged 6 to 11

Did pass the swimming test

Did NOT pass the swimming test

Monitoring: Chaperone does an active monitoring by constantly facing the body of water.

1 chaperone per 6 participants

Participants aged 12 and over OR successfully did swimming test

Monitoring: Chaperone does an active monitoring by constantly facing the body of water.

1 chaperone per 15 participants
Appendix 2: Pools regulations

Regulations in all pools:

1. A proper bathing suit must be worn (babies must wear a swim diaper).
2. Showering before entering the water is mandatory.
3. Spitting, urinating or blowing your nose in the pool is prohibited.
4. Safety belts or personal flotation devices are recommended for people who don’t know how to swim.
5. Only safety belts (dorsal ball or hippo belt and personal flotation devices (PFD) are permitted.
6. Civil and safe conduct is required at all times in the pool and on the deck.
7. Diving head-first and climbing on the shoulders of another person is prohibited in the recreational pool.
8. Diving masks, inflatable games and Frisbees are prohibited.
9. Short training flippers and front-mounted training snorkels are permitted in the swimming lanes.
10. No loitering or playing in the swimming areas marked off by ropes (buoy lines).
11. Beach chairs are permitted.
12. The no smoking ban is in effect at all places.
13. No alcoholic drinks may be brought into the confines of the Aquatic Complex.
14. Glass containers are prohibited; plastic bottles are permitted.
15. Eating on the deck of the pools is prohibited, except in the area allotted to the food concession.
16. Pets, including those kept on a lease, are prohibited.

IMPORTANT
• Anyone not complying with the regulations is subject to a warning.

• The Société du parc Jean-Drapeau reserves the right to eject anyone that does not obey the regulations or warnings.

• Parc Jean-Drapeau is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
Appendix 3: Emergency procedures

A person in distress
1. Signal to the lifeguard that there is a person in distress;
2. Talk to the person and encourage the person to move to a safe area;
3. Toss a rope-free object that is floatable to the person and encourage the person to use it as a means to get to a safe place, or throw a floatable object with a rope and pull the person to safety;
4. If you are in the water and your feet can touch the bottom, pull the person to the surface and immediately notify the lifeguard.

Children that go missing
1. Immediately notify the closest lifeguard;
2. Order the children out of the water if the lifeguards request that you do so;
3. Check whether the children under your care are all present, and notify the lifeguard if one is missing;
4. Briefly describe the missing child to the lifeguards;
5. Closely monitor the children in your group until the lifeguards give the signal to go back into the water;
6. Once the lifeguards have confirmed the child is out of the water – and only then – join in the search in the other non-aquatic areas of the swimming site.

In event of a storm
1. Immediately notify the closest lifeguard if you see lightning or hear thunder;
2. Order the children out of the water and direct them to a place that is covered;
3. Check whether the children under your care are all present and notify the lifeguard if one is missing;
4. Wait for the lifeguards’ instructions before going back into the water.
Who needs to take the swimming test??

Every participant in your group who does not want to wear a PFD must take the swimming test. If you have already evaluated your participants’ swimming ability, you can give a PFD to the children who, by your assessment, don’t have strong enough swimming skills. In such case, there is no need for a swimming test. Participants who ask beforehand for a PFD are also exempt from having to take the swimming test. Please note children aged 6 and under must have the PFD.

Swimming test specific to our facility

1. The test is done in lane 8.
2. The children line up behind the ladder.
3. Under the supervision of an SN, the children go one at a time and swim a distance of 15m.
4. Those who aren’t able to do this must wear a PFD for the day and will have to put on an orange-coloured identification bracelet.
5. We recommend that day camps note the names of participants who did not pass the swimming test.
How will we be able to identify the participants who have to wear a PFD?

Participants who are required to wear a PFD will have to put on an orange-coloured identification bracelet. Participants who are not required to have a PFD will have to wear a green-coloured identification bracelet.

At no time will a child who is unable to pass the swimming test (orange bracelet) be allowed to go into the swimming area without a life jacket.

Qui fournit les VFI ?

Parc Jean Drapeau provides flotation devices to help customers, adults and children. It may occur, however, on days when there are a lot of people or when there are many group reservations on the same day, that there aren’t enough life jackets for all the people needing them. And we also need to keep a certain number of life jackets for regular customers. This is why we strongly recommend that you bring along life jackets for the participants in your group. You can even suggest to parents that they provide their child with a life jacket. It’s a small investment that could make all the difference.

In the event that there aren’t enough flotation devices for every participant in your group, you need to make sure there is a fair rotation of swimming time for these participants. At no time will a participant who has not passed the swimming test be allowed to enter the swimming area without a life jacket.
### Appendix 5:
**Example of attendance sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Presence (am, 11h, 12h, 13h, pm)</th>
<th>Child’s medical characteristics</th>
<th>Needs device(x)</th>
<th>Had any swimming lessons?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Henri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Geneviève</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: Demarcation of the areas

A. Depth limit
In order to determine the depth of the area assigned to your group, keep in mind that the water level must reach the maximum under the armpits of the smallest participants in your group.

P : PARTICIPANT
C : CHAPERONE
Appendix 7: Effective monitoring

The children are not always on the surface of the water. To maintain visual contact, you must remember that water is a three-dimensional space. You also need to consider there are different factors which might hide the children from view and put them out of your sightline. These factors include reflections of light on the water surface and movements of the water that might make the surface translucent or opaque; floating objects; other swimmers; and pool walls. By changing your position to offset these factors, you will be able to keep the children in your field of vision at all times.

A. Some efficient methods to put into practice:

A buddy system: Each child is paired with a friend in his or her group. They have to stay together and watch out for each other. When you shout, “Buddy-up”, the pairs get back together and this enables you to see them more easily and also see if everyone is there.

Head counting: You must count the number of children in and out of the water on a regular basis. To make this easier, identify the children by sector (deep end, rest area, picnic table, etc.) or evacuate the swimming area (pool or beach) and send everyone to the meeting point.

Visual scanning: Monitor the movements of the children who go underwater (by diving, jumping or ducking under the surface) and make sure you see them re-emerge. You should also monitor the movements of non-swimmers to make sure they stay in the appropriate section of the swimming area.
B. Monitoring positions

Position the chaperones strategically in the pool. Form a barrier between the shallow and deep areas of the pool. Maintain a spread-out formation to ensure monitoring of the entire group of participants. Participants may only enter the water once the chaperones are properly in place.

P : PARTICIPANT
C : CHAPERONE