

During boating season, it is important to pay special attention to your adolescent riders. Below are some safety tips that are specific to children and infants.

## Wear a Lifejacket

- Always have your children wear a life jacket approved by the U.S. Coast Guard while on boats, around open bodies of water, or when participating in water sports.
- Make sure the life jacket fits snugly. Have kids make a “touchdown” signal by raising both arms straight up; if the life jacket hits the child’s chin or ears, it may be too big or the straps may be too loose.

## Infant-Appropriate Lifejackets

- According to the U.S. Coast Guard’s Office of Boating Safety, babies should not travel on a boat – including rowboats, kayaks, motorboats, and sailboats – until they are at the appropriate weight to wear an approved personal floatation device.
- Hold onto your baby while also wearing your own life jacket. Car seats are not a good option. If the boat were to capsize, the seat would sink immediately.



## Keep Young Children Warm

Infants and young kids are at a higher risk for hypothermia, so if you are taking a baby on a boat, just take a few extra precautions to keep your baby warm. If your children seem cold or are shivering, wrap them tightly in a dry blanket or towel.

## Don’t Rely on Swimming Aids

Remember that swimming aids such as water wings or noodles are fun toys for kids, but they should never be used in place of a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal floatation device.

## Develop Some Basic Rules & Learn from the Professionals

- Explain some basic boat rules and have everyone follow them.
- Children need to understand and follow rules such as keeping their hands and feet inside the boat at all times and no running on a boat.
- Enroll older kids in a boating safety class. Better yet, enroll with them.
- Get a vessel safety check every year for free from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadrons. For more information, go to [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org).

## Use Your Best Judgement

- A large portion of boating accidents that occur each year involve alcohol consumption by both boat operators and passengers. To protect your safety and loved ones around you, it is strongly recommended not to drink alcohol while boating.

- Learning CPR should be a priority. Local hospitals, fire departments and recreation departments offer CPR training.
- Make sure there is a working Carbon Monoxide alarm on any motorboat to alert passengers to and buildup of toxic fumes from the engine.
- Let your teen operate a boat only in a supervised setting and in adherence to the laws in your area. Laws regarding the operation of a boat or watercraft vary from community to community.