

DROWNING PREVENTION

COALITION OF CENTRAL ARIZONA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHILD DROWNING TRENDS IN 2007 REVEALED

Second lowest fatality rate on record in Maricopa County

Child drownings in Maricopa County are continuing to fall, according to a report released by the Arizona Department of Health Services. The report compiling data from 2007 indicates that **Maricopa County's child drowning rate was 4.1 per 100,000, the second lowest rate on record.** The lowest rate on record came just a year before, at 3.2 per 100,000 in 2006.

"One drowning is too many," says Lori Schmidt, President of the Drowning Prevention Coalition of Central Arizona, "but we are pleased to see dramatic reductions in fatalities, as compared to years when we saw more than 18 children per 100,000 drowning."

Additionally, the report indicates:

- An increase in incidents in **the East Valley**, which had nine incidents in 2006 and 29 in 2007. Incidents in Phoenix fell, from 33 in 2006 to 17 in 2007. West Valley incidents reduced from 11 in 2006 to six in 2007.
- The percentage of incidents involving **children of Hispanic descent** reduced sharply. This rate had climbed from 21 percent in 2000, to 36.1 percent in 2006. In 2007, just 17.8 percent of incidents involved children of Hispanic descent.
- Some data remained unchanged, such as the peak in water-related incidents near the **dinner hour**, and on **weekends**, as well as the percentage of incidents in which **siblings and grandparents were the presumed supervisor** of the victim.

The report also found that the average **number of incidents in the month of August has fallen.** While this may be due in part to the overall decrease, increased awareness and education surrounding Arizona's statewide "Drowning Impact Awareness Month" effort may also be a factor. The average number of incidents dropped from 6.8 between 1998 and 2003, to 4.5 since 2004, when Drowning Impact Awareness Month began.

"Wearing purple ribbons this month, talking about water safety, and being proactive as a community can only help us to keep children safe around water," says Schmidt. **This is especially critical going into the Labor Day holiday weekend.**

Families are urged to **BLOCK** access to pools when not in use, **WATCH** children when they have access to water, and **LEARN** CPR, and swimming lessons at the appropriate age for children.

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The Drowning Prevention Coalition, a community based organization comprised of parents, health and safety professionals and business leaders, exists to provide a forum to prevent drowning and near drowning through the promotion of education, legislative action and enhanced product safety. Check out our website at www.preventdrownings.org for more information.