Barriers to Accessing Swim Lessons and Water Safety Information

Research conducted by the American Red Cross

With financial and technical support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Network of Public Health Institutes
Research Study Overview

- Beginning in December 2020 through July 2021, the American Red Cross conducted a two-phased research study to examine:
  - Phase 1: Barriers to accessing swim lessons and water safety information in communities with children at higher risk of drowning.
  - Phase 2: Estimating at what age young children may acquire unsupported swim skills through developmentally appropriate group swim lessons.

- Funding for this initiative was provided to the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) through a Cooperative Agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC – 6 NU38OT000303-03-01, CFDA 93.421). NNPHI and the American Red Cross collaborated with the CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control on this initiative.

- This report contains the findings of phase 1 of this project. Phase 2 findings are provided in a separate report.
The purpose of the Phase 1 research was to assess perceived barriers to swim lessons and water safety education, particularly among populations at higher risk for drowning.

This was achieved through online surveys of parents/guardians/caregivers, youth/young adults and swim lesson training providers and instructors* throughout the United States.

*Note: For simplicity, parents/guardians/caregivers will be referenced as “Caregivers,” youth/young adults as “Teens,” and training providers and instructors as “TPs.”
Online surveys were developed, pilot tested and deployed during the winter/spring of 2021 for each of the following groups:

- Caregivers of children between the ages of 1 and 19 years ($n = 876$).
- Teen participants between the ages of 13 and 19 years ($n = 979$).
- TPs ($n = 930$).

Prior to deployment, focus groups among both (1) Caregivers and (2) Teens pilot tested and helped refine the surveys.

Oversampling from Black or African American and American Indian or Alaska Native populations ensured that respondents from demographic groups at highest risk of drowning were well represented.
Data Analysis

- Data cleaning and frequency analysis were performed.
- Results are presented by:
  - Racial/ethnicity identity.
  - Caregiver responses using age group of children.
  - Caregiver responses combined across all age groups of children.
  - Comparisons between TPs and combined Caregiver responses.
- “Other” responses were also reviewed for recurring patterns.
Study Limitations

- Quota sampling was utilized (rather than a random sampling strategy).
- Surveys were available in English-language only.
- Time constraints limited the extent of data analysis.
- Content validity was limited to an expert panel and focus groups.
- Data were collected in early 2021 while Covid-19 restrictions were in place in many locales.
Interpreting Results

- Where Caregiver responses were aggregated across age groups, an individual caregiver's responses may have been included up to 3 times in the combined total, to account for those with more than 1 child in different age groups.
- It was anticipated that TP responses would be more likely to report a barrier than individual caregivers, given that TPs responses reflect the many caregivers they interact with—while Caregiver responses reflect individual households.
### Data Summary – Race and Ethnicity

#### All Respondents by Race and Ethnicity, Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>TPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AI/AN*</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic**</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or no answer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native  
**Persons identified as Hispanic or Latino (Hispanic) might be of any race. Persons identified in the categories of White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN), or Asian or Pacific Islander are all non-Hispanic.

#### All Respondents by Race and Ethnicity, Percentage of Total

- **Caregivers**
  - AI/AN: 9%
  - Asian: 5%
  - Black: 31%
  - Hispanic: 14%
  - White: 40%
  - Other or no answer: 1%

- **Teens**
  - AI/AN: 2%
  - Asian: 44%
  - Black: 27%
  - Hispanic: 16%
  - White: 4%
  - Other or no answer: 4%

- **TP**
  - AI/AN: 6%
  - Asian: 6%
  - Black: 85%
  - Hispanic: 2%
  - White: 4%
  - Other or no answer: 4%
# Data Summary – Age

## Caregivers and TPs Respondents by Age, Counts and Percentage of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th></th>
<th>TPs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 24 years old</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34 years old</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44 years old</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54 years old</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64 years old</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 + years old</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>876</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>921</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Teen Respondents by Age, Counts and Percentage of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 14 years old</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 17 years old</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years old</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years old</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>969</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Data Summary – Gender Identity

### All Respondents by Gender Identity, Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>TPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### All Respondents by Gender Identity, Percentage of Total

- **Caregivers**
  - Female: 47%
  - Male: 52%

- **Teens**
  - Female: 66%
  - Male: 29%
  - Non-binary: 4%

- **TP**
  - Female: 72%
  - Male: 27%
# Data Summary – Income

Caregiver Respondents by Reported Household Annual Income, Counts and Percentage of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No income in 2019</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $15,000</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 - $24,999</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $34,999</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 - $44,999</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$45,999 - $54,999</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$55,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,999 - $99,000</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>873</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Summary – Income (cont’t)

Caregiver Respondents by Reported Household Income and Race and Ethnicity, Percentage of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Ethnicity</th>
<th>No income in 2019</th>
<th>Less than $15,000</th>
<th>$15,000 - $24,999</th>
<th>$25,000 - $34,999</th>
<th>$35,000 - $44,999</th>
<th>Prefer not to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AI/AN</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or no answer</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Summary – by ZIP Code

Caregivers

Teens

Training Providers

Note: Values represent count of respondents by state.
# Data Summary – Swim Lessons

## Surveys by Child Swim Lesson Response and Respondent Group, Percentage of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Youth ages 1-4</th>
<th>Youth ages 5-12</th>
<th>Youth ages 13-19</th>
<th>All Youth</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Teens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>1370</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/they have taken swim lessons from a friend or relative</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/they have taken private swim lessons from a certified instructor</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/they have taken group swim lessons or a swim class from a professional or certified instructor</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I taught myself to swim (caregivers)/ They taught themselves to swim (children)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I taught them to swim myself (caregivers)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/they have never taken a swim lesson</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Data Summary – Swim Lessons (con’t)

### Caregiver Survey by Child Swim Lesson Response and Parent Race and Ethnicity, Percentage of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>AI/AN</th>
<th>Asian/Pac. Islander</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They have taken swim lessons from a friend or relative</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have taken private swim lessons from a certified instructor</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have taken group swim lessons or a swim class from a professional or certified instructor</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They taught themselves to swim</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I taught them to swim myself</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have never taken a swim lesson</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other / please describe</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results
Barriers Related to Access or Convenience

- **Limited and conflicting schedules** within the household and inconvenient lesson schedules were recurring themes.
  - Caregivers’ work schedule was identified by all groups (14% Caregivers, 16% Teens, 54% TPs).
  - Teens identified school (16%), work (12%) and extracurriculars (14%) as barriers.
  - Similarly, inconvenient lesson schedules (13% Caregivers, 45% TPs) and conflicts with other household members’ activities (13% Caregivers, 12% Teens, 60% TPs) were frequently selected.

- **Affordability** of lessons also among the top barriers (12% Caregivers, 35% TPs).

- Caregivers reported **difficulty with registration** (10%-11%) and **finding lesson information** (10%).

- TPs often identified lack of transportation (22%) and class space (21%), but these were less frequently identified by Caregivers (6% and 7% respectively).

- **Caveat:** “None” = most selected barrier of Caregivers (24%) and Teens (19%)

  *See footnote, slide 16*
Results

Barriers Related to Interest, Motivation and Physical Challenges

- **Being too busy** was a recurring theme among Caregivers (10%) and TPs (41%); Teens also reported being too busy (20%).

- **Perceptions regarding lack of need** for formal swim lessons because of other available resources were consistent (10% Caregivers, 10% Teens, 33% TPs).

- Child’s **fear** of water was commonly cited (8% Caregivers, 9% Teens, 30% TPs).
  - Perceived fear among Caregivers varied (6% Caregivers, 32% TPs).
  - Teens (16%) as compared to Caregivers (7%) were more likely to believe they were not at risk for drowning.

- Teen participants also frequently selected **body image** (12%) and **changing/locker room-related concerns** (12%).

- TPs often indicated Caregivers **do not believe their child needs to learn to swim** (20%), but Caregivers infrequently selected this (4%).

- Open-response among TPs indicated **cold water temperatures** as a deterrent.

- **Caveat:** “None” = most selected by Caregivers (28%) and 3rd of Teens (15%)
Results
Factors That Would Aid Enrollment

- **Increased affordability*** (21% Caregivers, 22% Teens, 48% TPs)
  - And discounts for enrolling multiple members (13% Caregivers, 36% TPs)
- **Differing aquatic program offerings and schedules**
  - Offerings that better suit household schedules (17% Caregivers, 18% Teens, 49% TPs)
  - Concurrent programs for multiple children (12% Caregivers, 44% TPs)
- **A more welcoming environment** (16% Caregivers, 18% Teens, 28% TPs)
  - Accommodations to changing/locker room spaces (17% Caregivers, 20% Teens, 11% TPs)
- **Caveat:** “None” = Most selected barrier of caregivers (24%)

*9% of TP survey respondents indicated their classes are free; 32% indicated price per session as $1-$6; 38% indicated price per session as $7-$12; 22% indicated price per session as $13 or more.
Results
Water Safety Education

• Most Caregivers and Teens reported already having learned about water safety (80% Caregivers, 75% Teens).
  - Among these Caretakers, a smaller proportion report learning about water safety during/with swim lessons (11-15%) or in-person sessions at aquatic facilities (29%).
  - However, 95% of TPs report integrating water safety education into their swim lesson curriculum.

• At least half of Caregivers and Teens reported that children received water safety education at school (50% Caregivers, 57% Teens).
  - 27% of TPs were aware of children were receiving water safety education in their schools.

• Primary barriers to water safety education among TPs were having not considered it previously (26%), uncertain about how to start water safety outreach (20%) and failed attempts (18%).
  - Open-response among TPs also frequently indicated lack of time (6%).
Results
Water Safety Education (con’t)

- Among both caregivers and teens, respondents frequently selected online sources as desired ways to learn about water safety:
  - Online searches (43% Caregivers, 34% Teens)
  - Online courses (35% Caregivers, 22% Teens)
  - Mobile apps (22% Caregivers, 24% Teens)
  - Social media (18% Caregivers, 29% Teens)

- Of in-person options (e.g., aquatics facilities, non-aquatics locations, child’s school), caregivers (28%) and teens (24%) frequently selected in-person sessions at an aquatic facility.

- However, while social media (55%) and advocating for online courses (36%) were also among the top ways TPs reported conducting water safety outreach, others differed:
  - Outreach at schools (59% TPs)
  - Guest speaker at service organizations/camps/clubs for children (56% TPs)
  - In-person classes at locations other than aquatic facilities (37% TPs)
Results
Aquatics-Based Job Opportunities Among Teens

- More than half of teens (54%) have considered aquatic job opportunities. Of those, the top selected were lifeguard (54%), swim instructor (33%) and swim coach (27%).
- The top reason for not considering these jobs was teens’ perception of not having the swimming skills necessary to complete training (33%). Other reasons included:
  - Too much responsibility (18%)
  - Already having a job (17%)
  - Perceptions that an aquatics-based job would not help in their chosen career field (17%)
  - Lack of access to this type of training (16%)
  - Unaffordable training (15%)
Results
Barriers Among American Indian or Alaska Native Respondents

- The primary barriers related to **access and convenience** included:
  - **Affordability** (21%* Caregivers, 16%* Teens)
  - **Transportation** (16%* Caregivers, 16%* Teens) and **nearby pool access** (16%* Caregivers, 11% Teens)
  - **Conflicts** with other activities (14% Caregivers, 15%* Teens) or **Caregiver(s) work schedule** (16%* Caregivers, 13% Teens)

- The primary barriers related to **interest and motivation** included:
  - **Being too busy** (14%* Caregivers, 28% Teens)
  - **Having other resources** (e.g., family, neighbors) who can teach the child/self to swim (18%* Caregivers, 21%* Teens)
  - **Not perceiving that the child/self is at risk of drowning** (10% Caregivers, 17% Teens) or **not perceiving lessons as a priority** (11%* Caregivers, 14%* Teens)

- In addition, AI/AN respondents indicated that a more welcoming environment and changing/locker room accommodations would aid enrollment.

*Indicates that this racial or ethnic group had the highest percentage of respondents indicating this barrier
Results
Barriers Among Black or African American Respondents

- The primary barriers related to access and convenience included:
  - Conflicts with Caregiver(s) work schedule (13% Caregivers, 17% Teens) or other extracurriculars/household activities (11% Caregivers, 13% Teens). Teens also reported issues with work (14%) and school schedules (15%)
  - Lack of nearby pool access (12% Caregivers, 17%* Teens)
  - Unsure where to find information (11% Caregivers, 13% Teens)

- The primary barriers related to interest and motivation included:
  - Being too busy (10% Caregivers, 17% Teens)
  - Not perceiving child/self at risk of drowning (10% Caregivers, 17% Teens)
  - However, caregivers indicated concerns regarding their child’s safety during swim lessons (10%) and some teens did indicate fear of water or drowning (12%)
  - Embarrassment in swimsuit (11% Teens)

- In addition, Black respondents sought a more welcoming environment and changing/locker room accommodations.

*Indicates that this racial or ethnic group had the highest percentage of respondents indicating this barrier
Results
Barriers Among White Respondents

- The primary barriers related to access and convenience included:
  - Conflicts with Caregiver(s) work schedule (15% Caregivers, 17% Teens) or convenience (14% caregivers). Teens also reported issues with school (21%*) and extracurricular schedules (18%)
  - Caregivers also identified issues with registration (12%-13%)
  - Teens indicated lack of nearby pool access (16%) and affordability (15%)

- The primary barriers related to interest and motivation included:
  - Being too busy (9% Caregivers, 21% Teens)
  - Caregivers also indicated fear for the child’s safety during lessons (11%*) as well as having access to other resources (e.g., family members) who can teach the child how to swim (10%)
  - Teens expressed discomfort with changing/locker room areas (16%*) and embarrassment about how they look in a swimsuit (15%). Many did not think they were at risk for drowning (16%)

- In addition, White respondents sought a welcoming environment and more affordable lessons (and among Teens, single-gender lessons*).

*Indicates that this racial or ethnic group had the highest percentage of respondents indicating this barrier
Results
Barriers Among Hispanic Respondents

- The primary barriers related to access and convenience included:
  - Conflicts with other household activities (17%* Caregivers), Caregiver work schedule (14% Caregiver, 15% Teens), youth work/school schedule (15-16% Teens) or other convenience-related issues (14%* Caregivers)
  - Issues with registration (14-15%* Caregivers, 7-13% Teens) and affordability (15% Caregivers, 12% Teens)
  - Caregivers indicated facility inaccessibility (16%*) and inability to enroll multiple children (14%*)

- The primary barriers related to interest and motivation included:
  - Being too busy (11% Caregivers, 20% Teens)
  - Caregivers also indicated their child’s lack of interest (11%*), child’s fear (10%*), concern about hair (10%*), staff that doesn’t speak their language (10%*), and having other resources to teach their child (13%)
  - Teens expressed lesson/swimsuit embarrassment (9-11%). Many did not perceive a risk of drowning (14%), although 12% had safety concerns.

- In addition, Hispanic respondents generally sought several elements of a welcoming environment (e.g., language and changing/locker room considerations and same-gender lessons).

*Indicates that this racial or ethnic group had the highest percentage of respondents indicating this barrier
Results
Barriers Among Asian or Pacific Islander Respondents

- The primary barriers related to access and convenience included:
  - Conflicts with other household activities (13% Caregivers, 14% Teens) as well as other other scheduling issues including school schedule, Caregiver schedule, inconvenience, and teen-reported extracurricular* activities
  - Affordability was the top barrier identified by Caregivers (18%) and lack of nearby pool access was also identified (12%)

- The primary barriers related to interest and motivation varied by group:
  - Among Caregivers, 15% reported having other resources for the child to learn to swim. 10% also reported (a) concern about the child’s safety and (b) the child having no interest
  - Among Teens, 31%* reported being busy, 12-17%* reported embarrassment associated with swim lessons. However, while 15%* reported being afraid of the water, 19%* perceived they were not at risk

- In addition, Asian teen respondents sought a more welcoming environment and changing/locker room accommodations.

*Indicates that this racial or ethnic group had the highest percentage of respondents indicating this barrier
Recommendations
Data-driven Information

▪ Use data-driven approaches to learn about your community—rather than assumptions—which can help illuminate:
  • Barriers (or the lack thereof) among and between groups.
  • Factors that aid enrollment.

▪ Examples of findings revealed during this study that were contrary to expectations illustrate this point:
  • Contrasting with general discourse among swim instruction and water safety professionals, transportation was not a frequently reported barrier (10% or fewer across all racial ethnicity groups).
  • Affordability of lessons was more frequently an issue among AI/AN (21%) and Asian (18%) Caregiver respondents.
  • Black and White Caregiver responses often did not differ dramatically.
  • Across Caregiver groups, Hispanic respondents indicated the most concern about hair and chemicals in the water (10%).
Recommendations
Data-driven Information (con’t)

▪ Examples of mechanisms to achieve data-driven information include:
  • Conduct one or more community needs assessments—especially for multiple facility organizations that serve diverse populations (this study’s Caregiver survey could be used as a template from which to start).
  • Conduct routine customer satisfaction surveys to assess facilities, programs, schedules, fee structure, processes, instructors and staff.
  • Utilize data from relevant and recent academic or industry reports to inform decision-making, such as this report.

▪ Create action plans to execute findings.
Recommendations
Schedule and Affordability

- Understand scheduling challenges of your population to adjust for:
  - Caregiver work schedules.
  - Teen school, activity and work schedules.
- Provide programming options that allow for multiple children of different skill levels to attend at the same time.
- Assess fee structure for possible areas of improvement, including:
  - Better affordability for Caregivers of multiple family members (e.g., discounts, scholarship opportunities).
  - Better affordability of aquatics job training, such as lifeguard or swim instructor training.
Recommendations
Welcoming Environment

- Take steps to (1) better understand interpersonal and structural barriers among teens and caregivers related to fostering a welcoming environment and, (2) consider facility configurations and devise strategies to address concerns such as:
  - Changing/locker rooms.
  - Facility accessibility.
  - Differences in language spoken by instructors and caregivers.
  - Teens’ embarrassment regarding swimsuits and swim trunks.
  - Some teens’ preference for single-gender group swim lessons.
Recommendations
Communications/Messaging

▪ Communication Strategies
  • Use your online or digital resources to educate your community about water safety, including the use of:
    o Social media
    o Blogs
    o Online courses
  • Work with your information technology team to optimize searches when people are seeking knowledge and information regarding your programs.

▪ Communications/Messaging
  ▪ To Caregivers:
    o Better communicate the advantages of learning to swim as a life skill and water safety from trained professionals
    o Communicate a stronger message that it is recommended that children as young as 1-year old begin some level of introduction to swimming.
  ▪ To Teens:
    o Provide and market appealing lesson/training opportunities.
Recommendations
Water Safety Education

- Integrate water safety into swim lessons in a clear and informative way so caregivers and course participants "know" they are getting essential water safety information.
- Incorporate water safety education programs that take place at aquatic facilities.
- Utilize and share pre-existing online water safety education programs with teens and caregivers, such as the Red Cross Swim app and online courses.
- Develop or share water safety education on online platforms, including (low-cost) outlets like social media pages.
- To successfully initiate water safety education outreach efforts, seek out and participate in water safety/drowning prevention coalitions made up of a wide range of stakeholders in the community in order to combine efforts with respect to knowledge, resources and networks.
Next Steps: Dissemination of Findings

Articles and abstracts are intended to be submitted to the following:

- **Publications**
  - *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*
  - *American Journal of Public Health*
  - *Pediatrics*
  - *Injury Prevention*

- **Presentations**
  - *American Public Health Association Conference*
  - *Association of Aquatics Professionals Conference*
  - *Diversity in Aquatics Convention*
  - *World Aquatic Health Conference*
  - *National Recreation and Parks Association Conference*
  - *National Drowning Prevention Alliance Water Safety Conference*
Thanks!