



Longfellow's WHALE Tales

Water Habits Are Learned Early

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Today, your child learned about when and why it's important to wear a life jacket in, on or around the water. But did you know? Even if you are a strong swimmer, there are times adults should wear a life jacket too.

Be a positive role model and a safety champion for your entire family by following these guidelines for life jacket use:

- **Small children and weak swimmers in your group** should wear a life jacket any time they are in, on or around water, including at pools or waterparks and when fishing on a bank or pier.
- **Everyone in your group** should wear a life jacket when boating, water skiing or doing other water sports; and doing activities around cold water and ice.

Before you or your child puts a life jacket on, you should make sure you're all using the right life jacket for the activity, in the right size for the user's weight. The life jacket should also be U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)-approved. You can find this information on the label printed inside every USCG-approved life jacket. Once on, check buckles and straps for proper function. If a life jacket is damaged or torn, it's time to throw it away.

The phrase your child learned today was: Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Life Jacket. A life jacket doesn't work if you don't wear it. According to statistics from the USCG, among drowning deaths while boating, 85% of those who drowned were not wearing their life jacket.

To learn more about life jacket use and water safety, visit [redcross.org/watersafety](https://www.redcross.org/watersafety). You can also visit [uscgboating.org](https://www.uscgboating.org) where you can navigate to the safety page for detailed life jacket information and boating education resources.

Happy boating!

Longfellow