



Longfellow's WHALE Tales

Water Habits Are Learned Early

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

In today's Longfellow's WHALE Tales lesson, your child learned that it's important to understand the water environment where you are swimming, boating or doing other water activities so you can adapt to the unique safety risks of each setting.

What does this mean?

If your family most commonly swims in a pool, for example, but you are planning a trip to the ocean or a lake or a river, you'll need to be ready for a lot more unpredictability!

Waves, currents, changing tides and aquatic life can all make swimming in a natural waterfront setting more fun and interesting, but also more dangerous. Plus, natural environments may also introduce things like underwater hazards, colder temperatures, rapid changes in conditions, plus the addition of watercraft, jetties and dams.

To help keep your family and yourself safer:

- Always supervise your children as they swim and choose lifeguarded areas for an extra layer of protection.
- Ensure all members of your family know their limits when it comes to swimming skills.
- Be aware of weather and water conditions and pay attention to posted warnings.
- Always enter water feetfirst.

To learn more, visit [redcross.org/watersafety](https://www.redcross.org/watersafety) and visit the resource pages for *Swimming Safely in Lakes, Rivers and Streams* and *Swimming Safely at the Beach*.

You'll also find information on swim classes for the whole family along with first aid, CPR and water safety courses you can take to be as prepared as possible, wherever you swim.

Stay smart!

Longfellow