



Longfellow's WHALE Tales

Water Habits Are Learned Early

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

If your child or another loved one or friend was in danger of drowning, would you know what to do?

While your instincts might tell you to jump in after the person to pull them to safety, the reality is that going into the water after a person who is drowning is not the best answer. In fact, the sad truth is that news stories abound about well-meaning people who enter the water to try to rescue someone who is drowning, only to fatally drown during the attempt themselves.

Today in Longfellow's WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children, your child learned about a safer way to help someone in danger of drowning, and it's something you should know too.

It's the phrase "reach or throw, don't go." And it means that you should not attempt to enter the water to try to rescue someone who is drowning. Instead:

- **With a reaching assist:** You'll try to reach out to the person in the water with an object that the person can grab. You'll then use the object to pull them back to safety.
- **With a throwing assist:** You'll throw the person an object that floats, ideally with a rope attached, so they can use it to stay afloat and get safely back to shore.

Both of these assists allow you to more safely help from dry land.

If you are not familiar with these types of assists, we strongly encourage you to visit [redcross.org/watersafety](https://www.redcross.org/watersafety) to learn how you can sign up for a water safety course for adults. You'll also find resources for learning first aid and CPR, which can be crucial in the moments after a water emergency occurs. Plus, you'll find information on swim lessons for every member of your family and information you need to know about your role as an adult in drowning prevention.

Don't leave water safety to chance!

Longfellow