

Case Study: Maricopa County, Arizona

The late 1980's were difficult years for drowning in Arizona. Nearly a school bus of children, drowned each year in Phoenix alone; as well as many more in cities and counties across the state.

In 1989, Arizona Department of Health Services partnered with Phoenix Fire, hospitals and parents to establish a Children Aren't Waterproof group to address the drowning issue. With drowning a too often emergency response for many fire departments and hospitals; a collaboration was formed that year, the Drowning Prevention Coalition of Central Arizona and went statewide in 2009, as the Drowning Prevention Coalition of Arizona, a 501 3c non-profit.

The goal was to provide a forum for drowning prevention efforts through the promotion of education, legislative action, awareness, and enhanced product safety. Partners included individuals from different cities, industries, and backgrounds to work toward a common cause that significantly benefits the entire community.

Goals were set to assure the Coalition was a collaborative effort to share and support educational efforts across the state. Goals accomplished included:

- Consistent messaging
- Developing a kindergarten and first grade curriculum on water safety that met state standards
- Developing the Water Smart Babies program for pediatricians in Arizona
- Data Collection [Maricopa and Pinal Counties \(Valley of the Sun\) - Children's Safety Zone \(childrensafetyzone.com\)](#)
- Barrier Ordinances
- Website www.preventdrownings.org
- Quarterly newsletter
- Sponsoring and partnering on events

Over the years, through education and persistence, the child drowning rates in Arizona have declined, though our state population continues to increase. In 2020, the state saw its first major uptick of child drowning, 8% in one year. Incidents increased from 1.2 per 100,000 children in 2019 to 1.3 per 100,000 children in 2020. Lack of supervisions the leading cause of child drowning deaths in Arizona. [Arizona Child Fatality Review Program | Twenty-Eighth Annual Report \(azdhs.gov\)](#)