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For Immediate Release

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**Illinois DCFS issues public service announcements  
urging the public to keep children safe near water**  
*May is Drowning Prevention Month in Illinois*

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Illinois DCFS today released two audio and two video public service announcements (PSAs) aimed to educate the public about the importance of actively watching kids when they are in or near water to prevent accidental drowning deaths.

According to the CDC, drowning ranks fifth among the leading causes of unintentional injury and death in the US, and is the second leading cause of injury death for children ages 1 to 14 years. More children between the ages of 1 and 4 die from drowning than any other cause of death except birth defects.

In 2016, 21 Illinois children under the age of 18 lost their lives due to accidental drowning: 13 in pools, three in bathtubs, two in lakes, two in rivers and one in a drainage ditch.

“Drownings happen quickly and silently; and in as little as one inch of water,” said Illinois DCFS Director George Sheldon. “In this age of constant distraction, it is important for parents and caregivers to actively supervise children when they are in or near any body of water.”

Use these links to listen to, watch or download the PSAs:

- [Child Drowning Prevention PSA \(:30 English\)](#)
- [Child Drowning Prevention PSA \(:30 Spanish\)](#)
- [Child Drowning Prevention Video PSA \(:30 English\)](#)
- [Child Drowning Prevention Video PSA \(:30 Spanish\)](#)

For more water safety tips, including posters and coloring books for children, visit [www.DCFS.Illinois.gov](http://www.DCFS.Illinois.gov).

Text of Governor Rauner's proclamation:

WHEREAS, drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children ages one through four, accounting for nearly one-third of all accidental deaths of toddlers and pre-school children; and,

WHEREAS, drowning is the second leading cause of death for children ages one through 14 and claims the life of an average of two children per day in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, child drowning can occur in seconds in pools, bathtubs, hot tubs, decorative garden ponds, and even buckets that contain as little as two inches of water; and,

WHEREAS, 21 Illinois children lost their lives to accidental drowning in 2016: 13 in pools, three in bathtubs, two in lakes, two in rivers and one in a drainage ditch; and,

WHEREAS, for every child that drowns, five more are victims of near-drowning that require emergency medical care, often leading to hospitalization and causing long-term brain damage that can include: memory loss, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning that results in a permanent vegetative state; and,

WHEREAS, inadequate supervision of children, which includes neglect that results in drowning, is the third-leading cause of all child deaths indicated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services; and,

WHEREAS, it is important to recognize that constant adult supervision is needed when children are near or in water; and,

WHEREAS, the use of floatation devices and inflatable toys cannot replace parental supervision because such devices can suddenly shift position, lose air, or slip out from underneath, leaving the child in a dangerous situation; and,

WHEREAS, adults need to practice "Reach Supervision" by staying within an arm's length reach of young children and not rely on substitutes; and,

WHEREAS, the state's "Get Water Wise...Supervise!" campaign urges the public to prevent childhood drowning and life-altering near-drowning by providing adult supervision whenever children are near or in water; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Illinois Child Death Review Team and other community partners that recognize that childhood drowning is preventable if proper adult supervision is provided;

Therefore, I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim May 2017 as Childhood Drowning Prevention Month in Illinois, and encourage all parents and caregivers to learn and practice proven child water safety precautions, ensuring the safety of all Illinois children.