

Good afternoon everyone...

On behalf of Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez, it is my pleasure to join you this afternoon for this very important event.

We live in a community that is surrounded by water – whether our beautiful ocean, canals, and swimming pools – there is water everywhere.

And we all know that our children are at the highest risk of drowning deaths, with Broward and Miami-Dade County ranking highest among drowning deaths.

In fact, for the state of Florida, enough children to fill three to four preschool classrooms drown, all before reaching their fifth birthday.

These are sad statistics, but there is something we can do about it, and that's why we are all here.

We at the county teach swimming lessons and our Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department has effective and affordable “Learn to Swim Programs” for over 12,000 children and adults every year at thirteen pools throughout Miami-Dade County.

We have students from all ages, starting as young as 2 years old all the way up to Adults 55 and over. It's NEVER too early or too late to learn water safety and survival practices, developing your swimming skills in a safe and fun environment.

This April Pool's day, let's all come together so that we can help prevent drowning accidents.

I want to thank the Miami Heat for doing this to our help our community, and all the partners that have come together to increase water safety.

On behalf of all of us at Miami-Dade County, thank you!