

Boating for Kids

Probably the most important part of boating for kids is to teach them boat safety. Boating is an activity that the whole family can enjoy - especially kids. Boating safety is something they need to learn early so that they can carry it with them throughout their lives into adulthood.

The number one safety rule when boating with kids is that they must wear a personal flotation device (PFD) at all times. Accidents can happen no matter how careful you are. The number one reason for drowning is when people are thrown overboard and are not wearing a PFD. Many kids can't swim well enough to stay afloat in a traumatic situation like that, so the PFD will literally save their life in most scenarios.

Teach your kids about the equipment that must be on all boats and why that equipment is there. For example, the fire extinguisher must be there in case of a fire on the water. Some kids think, "Why do we need a fire extinguisher when there's water all around to put out the fire?" Explain to them that not all fires should be put out with water. The boat runs on gas, and if a fire erupts, you should not put a gas fire out with water.

Boating safety for kids also entails letting them know what various distress signals are and why they are used. For example, flares indicate a stranded boat. A continuous foghorn means a problem on board, etc.

Older kids may want to try out steering the boat. This can be a very exciting time for them. Start them out slowly and above everything else, explain to them the "rules of the road" including which boats have the right of way and how to pass safely. Plus, you should definitely stress to them to travel at a safe speed and not too fast to avoid accidents.

Kids should also know about basic first aid procedures. They should know not to move a person who might have a broken limb and even how to perform mouth to mouth resuscitation. CPR might be a little advanced for younger kids, but older kids can learn CPR from a Red Cross first aid course.

When you are boating with kids, the experience can be great for all of you. It's a wonderful opportunity to teach them about nature, water life, and so much more. There are all sorts of boating trivia questions that kids will love to try and answer. Ask them why they think life jackets are orange and why they call the bathroom a head. You can make a game of your day on the water while boating and teach your kids valuable lessons. Boating for kids is a great

learning opportunity that will stay with them forever and ever!