

The Best PFDs

Personal Flotation Devices:

- Make sure they are appropriately sized
- At time of purchase, zip, snap and buckle completely
- Have child sit down during fitting
- Try on with clothes typically worn while boating
- Adjustable sides accommodate various layers of clothing
- V-neck styles tend to be most comfortable
- Test in a swimming pool or other warm water

Customize PFDs:

- Add lots of reflective tape
- Attach a waterproof whistle

Water wings and inflatable beach toys are not PFDs!

Immersion suits:

- On some commercial fishing vessels, everyone, regardless of size, must have an appropriately-sized suit
- Few, if any, companies manufacture suits for small children
- Check for fit and condition at least once a year

PFDs and the smallest boaters:

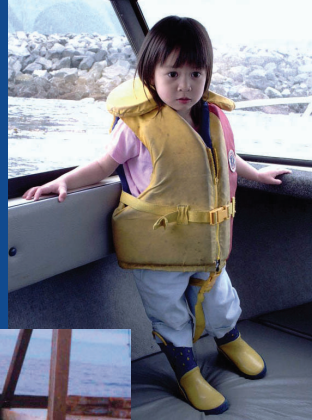
- Even newborns are required to meet requirements for appropriately-sized PFDs as required by vessel type
- Lifejackets are typically not available rated for children under 20 lb.

- Immersion suits sized for infants or toddlers are not currently manufactured
- Grab handle attached to floating collar aids retrieval from water
- Always buckle crotch straps

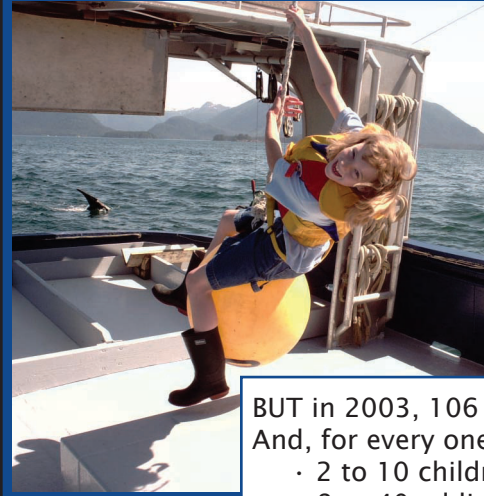


Boating & Fishing With Children in Alaska

Practical Tips from Seasoned Boaters & Commercial Fishers



Boating should be both FUN . . .



. . . and SAFE for children aboard your vessel

BUT in 2003, 106 children died in boating-related incidents
And, for every one child death by drowning

- 2 to 10 children are hospitalized following water incidents
- 8 to 40 additional children are seen in emergency rooms and released

The suggestions presented here are the cumulative knowledge and experience of parents who commercially fish with their children aboard, Alaskans who travel, hunt and recreate on the water with their children, and the boating safety professionals at the Alaska Marine Safety Association. Not all ideas will be applicable or practical for all vessels or families. Please consult the resources listed in this brochure for additional information.

Have a Child-Friendly Vessel

When acquiring a new vessel, or altering one to accommodate youngsters, think about:

- Activities, including play and schooling, to be conducted onboard
- Ages of boaters
- Boaters' gear (infants especially require a lot of items)
- Ages and sizes of vessel operators
- Ease of boarding while carrying a child
- Ease of boarding for children
- Presence and placement of handholds
- Rails around decks
- Steepness of companionway steps
- Stoves and heaters
- Location of bunks and settees
- Sharp corners and edges
- Child-containment possibilities

Practice Safety Aboard Every Day

- Have firm rules requiring safe behavior by both children and adults at all times
- Have appropriately sized PFDs for everyone on board . . .
- . . . and by law children under 13 **always** wear PFDs on deck or in open boats
- Consider safety harnesses with quick-releases that hold firmly until released
- See that young children are always supervised
- Consider barriers to limit children's access to some vessel areas
- Cover all "holes" with netting
- Make sure decks have non-slip surfaces
- Insist upon footwear with good traction

Safety in Port and On Shore

On the dock:

- Young children and non-swimmers wear PFDs
- Appropriate footwear is worn
- No horseplay
- Young children are always supervised

Getting to Shore:

- Use a safe and stable dinghy
- By law, children under 13 wear PFDs

On shore:

- Take a shore kit with items such as a handheld VHF radio, first aid supplies, fire starter, snacks, bug repellent, sunscreen and flashlight
- Make sure clothing and footwear are suitable for the terrain and weather
- Always supervise young children
- Children should have knowledge about the environment and potential dangers

Healthy Children Aboard

Be prepared with a well-stocked first aid kit created in consultation with your health care provider. Include painkillers, cold and cough medications, disinfectants, and treatments for fish poisoning, cuts and scrapes, burns, itching, rashes and bites, as well as other items to meet specific needs and a good medical reference book.

Of special concern onboard:

- Seasickness: Treat with children's Dramamine, ear patches, ginger in various forms, chamomile or mint tea, plain crackers, bland soup or broth
- Sunburn: Avoid with sunscreen, sunglasses, wide-brimmed hats that tie on, shade screens, mid-day naps
- Dehydration: Provide plenty of not-too-sweet liquids throughout the day
- Fatigue: Schedule naps and quiet times
- Hypothermia: Prevent with proper clothing in layers, hats, by staying dry, and by insulating from cold, wet and wind

Preparing for Emergencies

- Children should be part of emergency drills
- Practice **quickly** donning PFDs and immersion suits
- Teach children how radios and other communications work, how to call for help, and how to give a proper Mayday
- Practice chart-reading, using a GPS, and familiarization with landmarks
- Teach vessel operations as appropriate
- Stress obedience during an emergency (Don't yell!)
- Make sure that in an abandon ship situation children know where to muster, what to do, what to grab, and what to leave behind
- Learn and practice what to do if someone falls overboard

Safe Containment of Infants & Toddlers

- Know the safety pros and cons of children barricaded into or tied onto a vessel
- Plan for quick release and escape of a contained child in case of emergency
- Be aware that car seats and other carriers typically float upside down with a child strapped inside
- Bungy cords, net and hooks make a barrier across a settee or bunk
- Folding gates, plywood or netting close off open doorways
- Harness or tether a child to a "zip line" on deck
- Pad sharp corners and edges
- Toddlers who are unsteady on their feet may benefit from wearing bicycle helmets
- Choose on-deck containment that does not preclude child from wearing a PFD
- Front and backpack child carriers keep adult hands free when carrying a child onboard or while boarding or disembarking
- Latch door to outside at night



Games and playthings:

- Rotation of the toys kept aboard is important
- Have duplicate "comfort" toys in case of damage or loss
- Save special games or toys as treats for the end of a long trip or especially hectic times
- Store puzzles in zippered plastic bags to save space
- Dry erase markers are fun on windows
- Kites can be flown from on deck or the beach
- Water toys are fun: squirt guns, funnels, rubber ducks, the deck hose
- On a trip to the beach, collect rocks to be thrown into water
- Provide books and recordings, even ones not readily enjoyed at home

Taking part in business endeavors:

- Even small children can be given chores such as cleaning decks or counting things
- Children on commercial fishing vessels must have crew licenses

Learning seamanship:

- Ropework and knot tying
- Chart and map reading and other navigation skills

And, throw onboard parties for birthdays, holidays, or no reason at all!

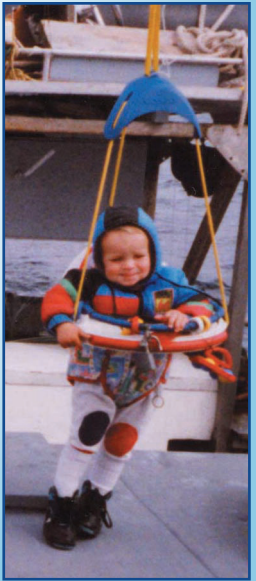
Eating Well

- Provide healthy meals and snacks, even when cooking is difficult: nuts, raisins and other dried fruit, dried meat, raw vegetables, and crackers
- Don't wait too long or too late for meals
- Pasta or rice are easy and filling
- Fresh fish and other seafood are nutritious and can be fun to harvest
- Carrots, red potatoes, cabbage, and apples keep well onboard
- Save special treats or meals for the end of a long trip or as a reward

Having Fun!

Exploring the environment:

- Live fish and other sea creatures in a tote make a temporary "touch tank"
- Carry binoculars, a specimen jar, a good magnifying glass, wildlife identification books
- Fish-cleaning can be an exploration of anatomy
- Start collections of rocks, shells or other natural objects
- Explore the night sky with a telescope and constellation chart



For More Information

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Please contact any of the above for further information and suggestions for boating and fishing with children in Alaska.

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