



Josh the Otter Water Safety and Awareness Project

Core Competency: Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Name of Activity: *“Josh the Baby Otter” Book Presentation*

The “Josh the Baby Otter” book presentation was developed by the Joshua Collingsworth Memorial Foundation a 501(c)3 organization. Parents Blake and Kathy Collingsworth honor the memory of their two-year-old son Joshua, who died on June 4, 2008 after falling into the family pool three days earlier. They believed they had every safety precaution in place, but the reality is that a drowning can occur in mere moments. After losing Joshua, they felt compelled to help reduce the dramatic numbers of deaths by drowning that occur in our country and around the world. The Joshua Collingsworth Memorial Foundation was created in July of 2008 to serve as a catalyst to strengthen water safety awareness and create an early childhood



educational program. Their goal is to empower children to be safe in and around ALL bodies of water to prevent similar tragedies. The Josh the Otter Water Safety and Awareness Project is dedicated to teaching young children about water safety through the use of Josh the Baby Otter a book written by Blake, which was recently translated into Spanish. Nearly 40,000 books have been distributed. The program has been presented in classrooms, community centers, zoos, pools, and childcare facilities around the world. Please view their YouTube video on the homepage of www.joshtheotter.org.

Enclosed is program/presentation guide designed to assist educators in demonstrating the importance of water safety.

Objectives of Activity: To educate young children with the knowledge of water safety through three main objectives:

1. To never go near water without an adult.
2. To first learn to float and/or swim before going in water.
3. To always swim with a buddy.

Materials Needed:

- “Josh the Baby Otter” Book
- Audio CD included in the back of the book (has PowerPoint on CD, too!)
- CD Player (or Computer Projector & Screen if using PowerPoint)

Optional Items:

- Josh the Otter Mascot Suit or Josh the Otter Stuffed Animal
- Large “Josh the Baby Otter” Book
- Additional Materials for each child: “Josh the Baby Otter” books, coloring sheets, and stickers

Time Length of Activity: 20-25 Minutes

Outline of Activity:

The *“Josh the Baby Otter” book presentation* is a fun and interactive classroom activity for young children. The recommended classroom levels for this presentation ranges from **pre-kindergarten to the second grade level**. However, the educator has the freedom to use their personal judgment in offering the classes to children beyond the set recommendations.

The presentation is divided into seven parts, as you will read in detail below. This project layout is to not limit the creativity of the educator but to provide guidance for the overall layout of the activity. Educators are encouraged to personalize the presentation and add additional water safety activities to the presentation if they desire.



This activity can be held within the classroom with a single class or in an assembly format with many classrooms in attendance. Have the children sit on the floor with ample area for the song and dance portion of the activity. On the next page you will find the seven recommended steps for the activity with detailed information to guide you through the activity.

1. Introduction of the “Josh the Baby Otter” book and the concept of water safety.

- Introduce the book to the classroom by asking for a volunteer to read the title (if working with younger ages, point to the words on the cover as you read the title).
- Before beginning activity Set the Ground Rules:
 - Be polite and listen to the educator and classmates.
 - If you want to speak raise your hand to be called upon.
- Inform the children of the process of the activity:
 - First will be the reading of the “Josh the Baby Otter” book.
 - Classroom will take short oral quiz about what they learned in the book. (Tip: If mascot is involved, you can let them know if they listen very well and do great of the quiz, you have surprise guest.)
 - They will get up and dance to the “Learn to Float” song and conclude with some fun activities.
- Explain that the purpose of the book is to teach the class about water safety.
 - Ask the children, “What IS water safety?”
 - Once children have given answers, help the children with anything they may have missed.
 - Introduce the three water safety lessons of the book:
 - Always be with an Adult when in or around water.
 - Always swim with a buddy.
 - Learn to Float!



2. Reading of “Josh the Baby Otter” book by the audio CD, PowerPoint, or the actual book and voice.

- If using the CD, Play Track 1.
- Tip: Have the children raise their hands if they see any additional animals on the pages to keep them paying attention. (i.e. fish, moose, crab)

3. *Short oral quiz over the three main objectives.*

- “Who should you be with when you are near or in the water?”
(A: An Adult)
- “Is it more fun to swim with a buddy?” (A: Yes!) “Why is it important to always have a buddy with you when you are in the water?” (A: To help keep each other safe in the water. To have two sets of eyes watching you to make sure you are safe.)
- “What should you FIRST learn to do before going in the water?”
(A: Learn to Float!)

4. *(Optional) Introduction of Josh the Otter mascot.*

- Have the children clap for themselves on their great job of listening to the story and answering the questions.
- Let them know that they have earned the opportunity to meet the surprise guest. Ask, “Who do you think it could be?” If they don’t know, point to Josh’s face on the book cover.



- The volunteer that is Josh should be hiding outside of the classroom in full costume and the educator will go and get Josh the Otter to present to the class.
- Tip: For some children, they may be scared of the mascot. It helps to tell the children, “Josh is a little scared, can you help him by welcoming him with a loud, ‘HI JOSH!’?”
- Hold Josh’s hand and walk him slowly into the classroom waving to the children. (Note: Mascot does not talk.)

5. *Sing-a-long to the “Learn to Float” song. (Mascot Optional)*

- Have the children stand up to sing and dance.
- Push Play Track 2 in CD.

- If using the mascot, have Josh the Otter dance with the children and you can ask the children to copy Josh's moves to get them involved.
- After the conclusion of the song, encourage the children to clap for themselves (and Josh) for their great job dancing.

6. Recitation of the "Josh the Otter Water Safety Pledge." (Mascot Optional)

- Turn to the page in the book with the "Josh the Otter Water Safety Pledge."
- Ask the children to put up their right hands to recite the pledge to Josh. (Tip: Tell them this makes Josh the Otter very happy!)
- Have the educator do a slow call and response of the pledge so the children can clearly respond to each piece of the pledge.
- Encourage once again that the children clap for themselves and have Josh the Otter clap as well.

7. Conclusion of "Hugs and High Fives" with Josh the Otter. (Optional)

- If you are using the mascot, have the children who would like to give Josh a final hug or high five to form a long line.
- If additional materials are going to be distributed to each child, have them come over to get the materials after they visit Josh. (Tip: The volunteer in the mascot suit will be getting warm and will need to get out of the costume as quickly as possible at the conclusion of the hugs and high fives.)
- Have Josh and the children wave good-bye to each other and have them thank Josh for coming. (Tip: Say that Josh the Otter has to go back to the water to cool down. It helps the children with his need to leave.)



As mentioned above, the following outline of the activity is provided to help the educator. The outline can be slightly modified or expanded by the educator if they desire.

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