



How to Choose the Correct Children's Life Jacket

presented by:



Sea Tow Foundation
for Boating Safety and Education



Children's life jackets come in all different sizes and styles depending on the child's body weight and comfort in the water. Every child should have a properly fitting life jacket and the U.S. Coast Guard requires that anyone under the age of 13 should be wearing a life jacket at all times when they are on board an underway boat. Kids grow quickly, though. So, a life jacket that fit a child well last fall may not fit well when it is time to go boating again in the spring. It is always important to check that the life jacket is the correct size for your children. To help with this, the Sea Tow Foundation has provided some quick tips to help you choose the correct life jacket for your kids.



1

Check label for approval

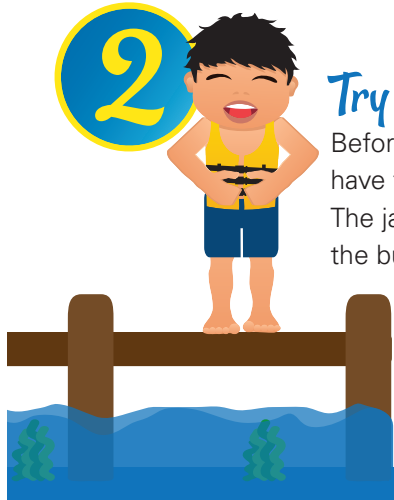
Check the label inside the life jacket to make sure it is U.S. Coast Guard approved and that the child's size fits into the weight restrictions and chest size measurements. Also, make sure that the life jacket is rated for the boating activity that you'll be participating in such as swimming and calm water activities vs. riding a PWC, waterskiing or whitewater rafting.



2

Try on life jacket

Before leaving the store or the dock, have the kids try on the life jackets. The jackets should be snug when all the buckles and/or zippers are fastened.



3

Can they move comfortably?

Have the child move her arms and body as if she were swimming to make sure that the jacket is comfortable and allows her to move easily.

4

Is the fit below the chin?

Have the child raise his arms over his head and tug on the jacket from behind to make sure that it doesn't go above the child's chin. If it does, the jacket is too big.



5

Do they float?

Once you get to the water, have the child try on the jacket in the water and get an idea of how it will help her float. This will also help the child from being scared if she is tossed overboard.



If a life jacket doesn't fit properly, a child can easily slip out of the jacket and be left without one in the water. You can keep the outgrown life jackets on board for younger siblings to grow into or in case your kids invite smaller friends to come along. Another option is that you can donate your child's outgrown life jackets to a Sea Tow captain near you so that they can be made available to other children through the **Sea Tow Foundation's Life Jacket Loaner Program**.

To learn more about the Sea Tow Foundation visit boatingsafety.com

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