



November 24, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to plead with our government, as a mother and a swim instructor, to please consider what is truly essential while evaluating future COVID 19 procedures.

Swim schools are absolutely an essential business. Water hazards don't go away because of a pandemic but training in a safe and health conscious environment is achievable.

The CDC reported over 10 drownings a day from 2005-2014, the rates will increase as education opportunities are forcibly decreased due to closures. And swim schools are small businesses with no "box store" option. If you lose reputable swim schools like Miller Swim School with 60 years of experience and reputation you are robbing the community.

As a mother of 4, water safety is a life skill and has to be a priority in a state like Oklahoma with so many lakes, ponds, rivers, creeks and pools. It is the only extracurricular activity or sport I can give my kids that can save their life and teach them how to save someone else.

As a mom of 2 kids with physical or developmental delays, it is even more important. Statistically special needs children are twice as likely to suffer from drowning and water injury without quality swim lessons as neurotypical children. These children need consistent training to support automatic reflexes in case of an accident. They need the structure regular lessons provide and the sensory regulation to help with their everyday life.

As we are getting into colder seasons where our water sources freeze over but don't freeze through, teaching our children the dangers of Oklahoma ice and how to respond to water during cold weather is essential to saving lives and saving families.

In the current state of public exposure and fear, YouTube and virtual education, this is one of the few places kids can safely get structured exercise to stay healthy and fight childhood obesity, an epidemic we have been trying to address with kids for years.

And while I'm mentioning virtual education, the bilateral brain development that is supported during structured swim lessons is an incredible academic boost for those kids who are so quickly falling behind because they are not receiving hands on support from trained educators anywhere else.

While safety from COVID 19 has to be taken seriously, I believe the pool is the safest place for my children.

Well balanced and maintained pools are amazingly clean and incredibly safe according to the CDC. We are quite literally sitting in a pool of disinfectant.

Our teachers and staff wear face masks in the building and shields when in the water. We have policies to enforce social distancing and take temperatures daily. Our parents are required to wear masks in the

building at all times. And our class sizes have been reduced to help distancing in the pool as well. And we clean and sanitize everything regularly according to CDC standards.

I am safer at my swim school than I am at any other essential business like Walmart or Target, and the lessons and interaction our children receive in swim class is as essential, if not more so, than anything those businesses are selling.

Thank you for your time,
Nicole Miller
Okahoma voter, mother and swim instructor