



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 30, 2024  
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## **Adaptive Swim Lesson Demonstrations Rescheduled Due to Inclement Weather**

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., April 30, 2024 – Due to inclement weather, the adaptive swim lesson demonstrations scheduled for today at Lake Lytal Family Aquatic Center in West Palm Beach have been rescheduled. Demonstrations will begin Wednesday, May 1, 2024, 9:45-10:30 a.m. and will continue May 2, 3 and 7, 2024, at the same time.

Students will demonstrate the important water safety skills they have learned through adaptive swim lessons that are part of the curriculum at Connections Education Center of the Palm Beaches, a nonprofit school in West Palm Beach that serves children with autism. According to the Autism Society of Florida, children with autism are 160 times more likely to drown than their neurotypical peers and drowning is the No. 1 cause of death for children with autism.

“Water safety skills must be a priority for children with autism. It’s common for them to ‘elope’ or wander from where they’re safe, and they’re often drawn to water out of curiosity,” explains Debra Johnson, Executive Director and Principal of Connections. “This can create a dangerous situation.”

That’s why students at Connections attend weekly, adaptive swim lessons with specially trained instructors. “Children with autism often learn to swim differently than other children,” says Johnson. “Our adaptive swim lessons enable students to acquire swim skills in a flexible order in a sensory-friendly environment with instructors who lean heavily on visual cues rather than verbal instruction.”

The school’s swim program has proven highly effective and has been shared as a model at a statewide educators’ conference. However, public funding falls short of covering its costs. In response, Connections has launched the “Draw the Line on Drowning” campaign. This initiative aims to raise awareness and funds to sustain the school’s vital swim program. To learn more or contribute, visit [give.classy.org/DLDautism](https://give.classy.org/DLDautism). A significant match is currently doubling all donations given up to \$50,000.

In addition, Connections is sharing essential water safety tips for children with autism on its website at [connectedpb.com/drowning-prevention-autism-awareness](https://connectedpb.com/drowning-prevention-autism-awareness).

Spectators are invited to watch the swim demonstrations at Lake Lytal Family Aquatic Center on May 1-3 or May 7, 2024, with advanced registrations made by calling the school at 561-328-6044. During the demonstrations, students will complete an aquatic obstacle course.

### **About Connections:**

Connections is a nonprofit educational center that delivers high-quality, specialized instruction to students with autism in Palm Beach County. They serve students ages 3-22 years and offer an innovative program for adults with autism. Learn more at [connectedpb.com](https://connectedpb.com).

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