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First-5 grant to fund water-safety programs throughout Riverside County

An infant falls into a pool and no one notices the tiny splash as the child sinks into the water.

In many cases, the scenario would turn into tragedy, but thanks to a \$198,000 grant, Riverside County health officials are hoping to prevent the potential loss of life. The funding, which was recently approved by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, will pay the cost of “self-rescue” courses for up to 50 infants up to 18 months old. The grant is from First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Family Commission.

Through the program and under the watchful eye of an instructor, infants become familiar with water and eventually learn techniques to prevent drowning if they happen to fall into a pool or spa. The classes will be offered at various locations in the county.

The grant runs through November and is being administered through the Injury Prevention division of Riverside University Health System – Public Health. It will also pay for water safety workshops for hundreds of caregivers and public health employees who work with families. Funding will also pay for 1,800 water safety tool kits, which include window and door locks, educational materials and whistles for those who are designated as “water watchers.”

“There is no telling how many lives will be saved because of the programs this funding provides,” said Sarah Mack, Public Health Director. “