

Mom Backed for Refusing To Take Blind Child To The Pool: 'Nervous'

A mom has been backed for refusing to take a blind child to the swimming pool.

In a post on Reddit's popular r/AmITheA*****, user u/RottenMomIsMe shared the story which has received thousands of upvotes and comments.

But when they arrived at the house to pick up the children for the day at the pool, the mom discovered that the cousin was blind. "Right away, I felt nervous. I was going to have six kids with me and no other adults," said the poster.

Virginia Jacko, president and CEO at Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, told *Newsweek*: "My motto is: A blind person can do anything a sighted person does, they may just do it differently. There are schools for the blind that have swimming pools, and at Miami Lighthouse, we take our summer campers to the pool regularly."

But Jacko did agree that blind children require extra support at the pool. "There are a few things that should be considered for blind and visually impaired children," she said. "It is vitally important that all pathways and walkways in the facility are kept clear of obstructions, and blind children should familiarize themselves with the swimming pool and facility – and what's happening around them."

The mom on Reddit explained: "I've always been a little neurotic about water safety. My son is a great swimmer, and so are his friends, but I've never met this girl before, and I don't know if she is a strong swimmer. I was worried that I would be constantly watching her the whole time, and that would mean I wasn't paying enough attention to the other kids. I decided to take the kids to the park instead."

The kids complained that they were no longer going to the pool, but at just eight and ten years old, they got over it quickly and still had a great day at the park.

"I did text the parents to let them know where we were, for safety," said the poster. "The aunt of the little girl just texted me back asking what happened to the pool plan." The mom replied to explain that she had decided on the park instead because she did not feel confident caring for six kids at the pool.

"She asked if I didn't take them to the pool because her niece is blind. I said six kids and water with one adult is just a lot. She said I was fine with five, and it seems obvious I just didn't want to watch a blind child in water," explained the poster.

"I responded that even if that's true – which, yeah, it is, I just didn't want to admit it – would that really be so bad? If I'm not comfortable in my ability to keep the kids safe in water, I shouldn't supervise them in water," she wrote.

The girl's aunt did not understand and told the woman that she was "a b****" for not taking the kids to the pool.

Online though, Redditors overwhelmingly sided with the woman. "One adult with six kids, one of whom is blind, seems like a recipe for disaster. I feel stressed just imagining it," said one reply.

"As a parent of small boys, and a veteran schoolteacher, I would not even know how to begin to supervise a blind child swimmer. You made the right call," said another commenter.

"If you're a parent taking a blind child to a swimming pool, talk to them about what you see. Sighted children often learn to understand what's happening around them simply by observing with their eyes," explained Jacko. "Blind children do not have these naturally occurring opportunities to gain visual information, which is why it is important for children with visual impairments to have extra explanations and descriptions."

When it comes to ensuring blind children can enjoy the same experiences as sighted children, Jacko says there is one clear answer: "The key to inclusivity for blind children is immersion, immersion, immersion. Miami Lighthouse is home to an internationally recognized inclusive Pre-K program which is the only program in the country where sighted and blind children together interact with the same curriculum. Many of these kids don't realize that some of them are blind and some are sighted – they're simply peers interacting, learning, and playing together every day."

"At the end of the day, you as the adult are responsible for keeping those kids safe," said another reply that agreed with the woman's choice to change the kids' activity. "I think you made the right call doing another activity where you were comfortable with the level of supervision you could provide."

Newsweek has reached out to u/RottenMomIsMe for comment. We were unable to verify the details of this case.