

## Debra Thompson

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**From:** Katie Tekla Eddy <ktekla@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 25, 2019 12:16 PM  
**To:** Assembly  
**Cc:** Buck Eddy  
**Subject:** Parks & Rec Facility Concerns

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Mr. Mayor & Assembly members:

I am writing this letter as a concerned parent, community member and Parks & Rec facility user. It has been brought to my attention that starting with the 2019 school year, children will not be allowed to enter the Parks & Rec facility without an adult until they are coming out of the 5th grade. This has a huge impact on my family and is very alarming.

The heart of a recreation facility is founded on community involvement and children. I want to encourage & train my children to have healthy habits. I want my children to be physically active. I want my children to be comfortable in the water and have good water safety skills.

Our community is built from working families & the facilities and resources that Petersburg offers is paid for by these taxpayers of our community.

My husband and I both work for a living, we do not have the ability to spend the summer accompanying our children to all of their activities. We send them swimming, they play at the gym, we send them to the library, and we send them to the trails to hike & play. I trust that if they are misbehaving in a public space that they will be sent home and that I will be notified that a facility is experiencing issues with my child.

I've heard that liability concerns are driving the decision behind this new rule, which I do not understand. Parks & Rec facilities and public swimming pools around the entire country are open to the public. I believe that what our facility is experiencing is a behavior & discipline problem. There needs to be a discipline policy in place, not a removal of all elementary children!

There should be a set of facility rules which includes things such as: notification to parents of children causing problems, three strikes & you're out suspension rule or requiring adult supervision for repeat offenders. Something to address the misbehavior of a set number of kids rather than punishment for all kids.

Take control of the facility and enforce the rules.

If facility staff have a difficult time seeing who is coming & going from the facility then this is an issue that needs to be addressed. There could be an audible reminder for people to check in at the front desk, there could be a video monitoring system, there are options other than denying access.

There are other options - please try to find a solution that does not include removal of our kids from public buildings.

It has been said that other facilities in Alaska have a higher age requirement for swimming pools. I called several **public** facilities around Alaska, specifically in regards to their swimming pools, and this is what I found:

Age limits for other **public swimming pools** in Alaska, to be in the water - not facility access:

- Ketchikan – Recreation pool: *6 years old* & able to swim one width; Competition pool: *7 years old* & able to swim one width of the pool
- Juneau – *8 years old* & able to swim one width of the pool
- Kodiak - *8 years old*

- Wasilla – *no minimum age limit*
- Fairbanks – *6 & under adult in pool; 7-8 adult in facility, 9 & up alone*
- Homer – *depends on swimmer - need to pass swim test*
- Cordova – *once you can pass the safe swimmer test*
- Palmer – *9 years old*
- Wrangell – *pass a swim test*

If swimmer safety is the issue then institute a safe swimmer test. Require that they be able to perform certain skills before they're allowed access to the pool unaccompanied. If facility behavior is an issue then deal with the behavior - don't limit access to a public space.

No other public facility in Petersburg has an age limit requirement. My kids can go to the library. They can walk the boat harbor. They can stop by City Hall or the Harbor Master facility. As long as they are at the facility during the allowed times and behaving according to the expectations of that facility, they are able to be there. If they were running around the library screaming & yelling or ripping up books, they'd be kicked out, and a parent would be called.

Please, don't allow our **public** Parks & Rec and swimming pool to be taken away from our children. Please give my kids a safe space to play during the summer, evenings and weekends. Please listen to the community and allow our tax dollars to provide the service we are requesting.

Sincerely,

Katie Eddy