

DAYTON

Father, bystander unable to save boy

3-year-old from Kettering drowns at Eastwood MetroPark.

By Steve Bennish
Staff Writer

The Kettering 3-year-old who drowned at the kayak water rapids at Eastwood MetroPark entered the water before his family real-

ized he was in danger Wednesday night.

Yousif Almosawi's father and a bystander tried unsuccessfully to save him.

Even the close proximity of trained rescuers, who were 200 yards away, wasn't enough to save the child, Dayton Fire Chief Jeffrey Payne said.

Five Rivers MetroParks Chief of Rangers Mark Hess said an inves-

tigation into the death of Yousif hasn't determined exactly how the child ended up in the Mad River and was swept by current into the deeper water of the Mad River Run kayak site.

"You never know when a quick slip or trip can happen," Hess added. "Rocks can be slippery anywhere around the water. We

Drowning continued on A8



Relatives and onlookers waited Wednesday at Eastwood MetroPark as rescue crews searched for Yousif Almosawi. JIM NOELKER / STAFF

Drowning

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just don't know."

When Yousif disappeared underwater, his father jumped in, Hess said. The father, who Hess said was close by, was not a strong swimmer.

He was aided by another man, an experienced swimmer, who happened to be in the park. Neither was successful at saving the child.

The boy's body was recovered by firefighter water rescuers in pooling water between the two fast-water

features built with boulders and rocks, Hess said.

Chief Payne said the child was playing on rocks on the riverbank when he entered the water, was swept into swift current that carried him through one of the water features before he was caught in the slower water pool down river. He had been in the water for more than 30 minutes.

The child was pronounced dead in the emergency room at Dayton Children's Hospital.

Police pulled the father out of the water near the Findlay Street bridge after

he had traveled downriver beyond the second fast water feature.

Stone steps close to where the child entered the water give kayakers easy access to the white water rapids and the two engineered rock play features that create the fast water. The steps may create a sense of safety and accessibility, but current and water can be an especially deadly hazard for youngsters or those who can't swim.

A sign posted at the site warns visitors that no swimming is allowed and that it's also off limits for tubing. The sign also says, "Always wear

a life jacket while paddling."

"Every indication is it is an unfortunate and tragic accident," Hess said.

There are no plans to alter the kayak recreational site, Hess said.

"It was built to be as safe as possible," he said "We do our best in the design of it."

The preliminary cause of death is drowning, according to the Montgomery County Coroner's Office.

Reports say the child went in the water at 8:03 p.m. and was found at 8:38 p.m. Payne said a number of crews trained in swift water rescues were only 200 yards away

at the Dayton Fire Training Center, 200 McFadden Ave.

Dayton Fire Capt. Mike Fasnacht, a member of one of the department's water rescue teams, said the child was found 10 feet from where he entered the water, which is typical for drowning victims. Rescue crews train at the Eastwood kayak site, he added.

"Our crews are not to be even around water without a personal flotation device or a vest," he said. "And it's hard to tell people that because people do not understand - they just think water is fun."

He added: "This is defi-

nately not a pool. It's very unpredictable and the speed of the water can change everything."

About four years ago, another youngster died in a river drowning incident, but the fatality was not on MetroParks property. In May of 2012, 13-year-old Musa Shakbandarov, of Dayton, drowned in the Mad River. The teen's body was found and pulled from the river near the Webster Street bridge.

NewsCenter 7 reporter
Mike Campbell contributed
to this report.