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"Keeping Our Beaches Bare"

Topless 3-year-old makes waves at pool

By Jack Kresnak

Detroit Free Press Staff Writer

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It may be all right for girls to bathe topless in pools in, say, Brazil, but don't try going topless at a water park in Detroit – even if you're only 3 years old.

Karima Sorel and her daughter Suhayla Smith, 3, learned that the hard way Wednesday when security guards at Wayne County's Chandler Park Family Aquatic Park called police on Sorel because she allowed her daughter to play in the pool topless.

Sorel, of Detroit, said she came to the park at about 11:30 a.m. Wednesday. The park, complete with water slides, wave and wading pools, is owned by Wayne County and managed by Winco Enterprises of Detroit.

Suhayla had her bikini bottom on, but her mother had forgotten the matching top.

"If I had the top, I would have put it on her," Sorel said Friday.

But Sorel saw nothing wrong with her daughter going topless, just like the 3-year-old boys splashing around in the pool.

Topless toddlers apparently can spark lust in adults who are sexually attracted to children – at least that's what Sorel said the park's security guards repeatedly told her during the standoff.

"If there are pedophiles in your park, please harass them and leave my daughter and me alone," Sorel said she told the guards.

So Sorel held her ground – or better still – waded deeper into the pool.

The guards then threatened to call Detroit police on Sorel and her topless tot. And finally, at Sorel's own urging, they

did.

At about 1 p.m., a police officer from the 5th (Jefferson) Precinct arrived, assessed the situation and, according to Sorel, told the park manager, Lorenzo Douglas, Sorel was doing nothing wrong.

Sorel said Douglas apologized. On Friday, Douglas declined comment, referring a reporter to Wayne County officials.

Sharon Banks, a spokeswoman for County Executive Robert Ficano, said the park personnel are working to maintain a family atmosphere where rules are consistently enforced.

Sorel said she and her husband, New York restaurateur Charles Sorel, have visited beaches in Brazil where swimsuits are a mere accessory.

"What I'm not understanding is the sexualization of a 3-year-old,"

Sorel said. ✨