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PARENT INFORMATION (5 months – 3 ½ years)

Teaching a child to swim takes commitment, knowledge, patience, understanding and love. Teaching a child also takes time - please allow us this time to enable your child to be a happy water confident swimmer. We have outlined a short summary of what we at the Swim Factory will be teaching you as a parent to assist in your child's progress.

Baby Splash (3 months – 5 months)

A baby who has little voluntary movement on land can start to experience a wide range of movement within water - with lots of stimulation sensations, all of which reinforce the learning process. The colour, movement and smiling faces are a very strong stimulus to develop babies' visual processing centres. Similarly the rhythm, laughter, splashing and variations in voice tone will stimulate the auditory centre in babies' brain. From birth, children are carefully watching adult faces to imitate and the more often they're exposed to happy, smiling, positive social interaction, the more positively they will develop in their own social and interpersonal skills. (Julie Zancanaro, Bapp.S.C.O.T.).

This class introduces water safety skills while helping to enhance parent/child bonding and acclimatise the infant to the water. Through some fun and enjoyable activities babies are introduced to back floating and improve their balance in the water.

Baby 1 (5 months – 12 months)

Babies are born with a natural grasp reflex. They will instinctively grasp and hold on tight to fingers, toys, clothing, and hair. In the swimming lesson we want to try to develop and utilise the babies grasp reflex. In doing so, we build strength, independence and teach babies to support their own body weight in the water. These gripping activities play an integral role in teaching children a respect for the water. Our aim is to teach children to grasp and pull up independently on an adults t-shirt.

Breath control is an essential element in the learn-to-swim process. By teaching breath control we make the first submersion free from fuss and trauma while helping the babies become conditioned to the activity. The infant learning the count for breath control which gradually increases from 1,2,3 to 1,2,3,4,5 etc. Here we prepare babies up to two years to react to a verbal conditioning trigger, as well as a lift and gradual controlled submersion. With daily practice in the bath, baby will soon react positively to these "trigger words" by becoming increasingly happy and confident with water.

A number of repetitive drills are performed within the lesson to allow the babies to take in the task at their own pace. The swim teacher will show a progression of these skills step by step to the parent. Allow them to enjoy themselves and progress at their own rate.

Baby 2 (13months - 20 months)

This level incorporates positive reinforcement and begins to include aspects to encourage independence for each swimmer. Activities within this level are designed to enable and encourage stimulation, movement and laughter within the aquatic environment. Repetition is key to the lessons success as it allows swimmers to learn and absorb tasks. We allow each individual to progress at their own pace, the instructor will guide and advise in this area.

Development of breath control is paramount to building confidence and allows your child to be less dependent of a parents hold. Floating is another area of focus which allows the child to feel comfortable in the water, floating is also a key safety element of the programme.

Baby 3 (21 months – 30 months)

Breath control is sustained and submersions are increased to a further distance. The trigger words and cues are imperative with this level. A repetitive kicking action through the water and learning to roll and float on their backs demonstrates gained independence. These infants are preparing for the next level and are learning to be happy, confident little swimmers.

Stepping Stones (2 ½ years – 3 years)

This level allows children to enjoy their lesson independent of their parent who now observes their child's progress from the pool deck. Again this lesson encourages the practice of stimulation, laughter and positive social interaction. This class develops the swimmer through further independence and enjoyment in the aquatic environment. Repetition of skills assists your child in water awareness and to develop the ever improving techniques used within swimming while still using the trigger words and actions.

Independence in the learn-to-swim lesson is very important. By encouraging independence we are trying to teach children their limitations, boundaries and in turn a respect for the water. The child's ability to participate in independent activities will be determined by their physical development.

For safety reasons it is paramount these little swimmers learn they do not enter the water until invited by the teacher. As in the baby levels, we condition the child to wait for any given command.

Tadpoles (3years - 3 ½ years)

Tadpole children are often competent in many skills while there is an increasing emphasis on helping to develop correct body position and actions to develop their swimming. They continue to develop their independence in the water and enjoyment within the program. The children learn additional skills and propulsion using equipment such as kick board for progressive drills which help prepare them for the next level. The swimmers now understand certain drills and also their attention within the class is increasingly addressed to enable maximum performance.

Swimming hints for parents

1. Parent/carer accompanying the baby must wear a T-shirt.
2. Please do not feed your baby/child prior to the lesson (at least one hour).
3. Speak to the Deck Supervisor or reception staff if you have any concerns or enquiries.
4. All babies are to wear a swim nappy if not yet toilet trained.