

Water Babies and Preschool Swim Class guide

This information sheet will provide a general overview of the aquatic programs that we offer for children age 6 months to 5 years.

During the first lesson, instructors will evaluate students to ensure they are registered in the correct class based on skill level. If an instructor feels a student would be better suited to a different level, they will discuss this with parents at the end of the lesson.

Note for parents: Please keep in mind that every child progresses at their own pace and pushing a child before they are ready could instill fear in them for life. Instructors are trained to recognize which students are ready for the next level and will do everything in their power to make each student's experience a success. Repeating a level or program is not necessarily a bad thing. Most students have to repeat a level at least one time before moving forward.

If lessons need to be cancelled for any reason, we will contact parents/guardians as soon as possible. Please provide accurate contact information on the registration forms.

Water Babies: Parent & Child Aquatics (ages 6 mon. – 2 yrs.)

American Red Cross Parent & Child Aquatics helps young children ages 6 months to 2 years become comfortable in and around the water so they are ready to learn to swim. It is NOT designed to teach children to become good swimmers or survive in the water on their own. Parent & Child Aquatics gives parents information and techniques to help orient their children to the water and to supervise water activities in a safe manner. Class will run 30 minutes each week.

Prerequisites:

- Child must be at least 6 months old
- A parent is required to accompany child in the water and participate in the class.
- This class is designed for children with no or very limited water experience.

Pre-school Swim (ages 3-5 yrs.)

The American Red Cross has instituted a new Preschool Aquatic Program. The preschool age group is now divided between three levels. The three levels mirror the first three levels in the Learn to Swim Program. The main difference between the two sets of programming is found in the techniques that are used to teach the various classes. The preschool age group will be taught using games and toys, rather than straight instruction. All of the levels in the Preschool Program are designed to streamline the advancement between preschool (ages 3-5) and the Learn to Swim Program (Ages 6 and up). For example, if a child is 5 years old and passes Level II Preschool class, the next year they can transition in to Level III of the Learn to Swim program, rather than starting back at Level I. Classes run 30 minutes each week. The descriptions of the three levels are below.

Level I: Students will learn how to enter and exit the water safely. Students will learn to submerge his / her head and open their eyes under the water to see objects. The child will learn to float and glide on his / her stomach and back while being supported and explore ways of changing position in the water using their arms and legs. Prior to enrollment in this class, child should have little to no in-water experience and may even be fearful of the water.

Level II: This level builds off of Level I. In this level, students will learn to submerge their entire head under the water while learning breath control. Students will learn to float on his / her stomach and back unassisted. Students will learn to move arms and legs in motions that will promote swimming on his/her own both on front and back. Prior to enrollment in this class, child should feel comfortable in the water and not be afraid to get their face and head wet.

Level III: Once the student can swim on his / her own, it is time to learn the fundamentals of different strokes. Level III offers an introduction to the elementary backstroke, increased endurance on front crawl and kicking action for the butterfly. Students will also begin to learn how to tread water effectively as well as kick on their side. The beginning stages of diving will also be taught. Prior to enrollment in this class, child should be able to float on their own (both front and back) as well as be able to swim on their own short distances.

Parents must accompany children to lessons. You may sit in the pool area during class, however, if this becomes disruptive to the lesson, instructors may ask you to sit in the lobby lounge area.

Health & Safety Concerns for Small Children:

- Doctors recommend that children with a fever, rash, diarrhea, any symptom of an infection, or any contagious illness NOT participate in class. Infection is generally spread through direct contact and not through the water. However, germs can be spread in water.
- Every child MUST wear diapers with tight fitting rubber pants or specifically designed swim diapers that are less likely to leak. Parents are encouraged to check and change child's diapers often. Make sure to wash your hands frequently, especially after changing diapers.
- Practice good hygiene by not changing your child poolside as germs can spread to surfaces in and around the pool causing illness. Please use the locker rooms or family change room. Wash your child thoroughly, especially their bottom, with soap and water before swimming. Invisible amounts of fecal matter can end up in the pool.
- There is a main pool entrance and an entrance in each locker room. Family change rooms are available in the lobby and on the pool deck. Parents must use gender appropriate locker rooms. Children over 4 years old needing assistance should use the family change rooms.
- Any child with ear infections or tympanotomy tubes should follow the advice of their pediatrician. Parents are encouraged to seek advice before beginning a swim class.
- Avoid swallowing water or having pool water in your mouth. Young children should not be submerged more than three (3) times in a lesson during the initial learning phase, to avoid swallowing water and/or preventing a condition known as hyponatremia (water intoxication).

Teaching Infants & Young Children:

- Each child is unique. Children learn motor skills at different ages. They learn at different rates and have different preferences. They are often affected by their parents' comfort in and around the water.
- Infants and young children learn best from "distributed practice", or lessons that use practice sessions with frequent rest periods. This style minimizes fatigue, gives time for the child to assimilate learning and helps to keep the child motivated and interested.

Infants and young children may be fearful or reluctant to approach the pool, to work with the instructor, other adults or to enter the water. Some fears are related to developmental level. Parents should remain calm and patient with children and not force them to progress before they are ready. Parent's positive attitudes toward swimming may help their child be less afraid of the water. The instructor will assist in making the lessons beneficial and enjoyable.