

IN THE POOL WITH YOUR CHILD – A PARENT’S ROLE



Joining your young child in the pool is a special time. It’s an opportunity for you to become both a teacher and a learner as you strengthen the bonds between you.

When you’re in the pool with your baby or toddler and your instructor, it’s important for you to become your child’s teacher. Your instructor is there to help, it’s their skill and experience that can enable you to become not just an ordinary teacher, but a great teacher.

The best learning for small children is from their parents, who they know and trust to look after them. That’s why we have parents in the water too, until children are at least 3 years old.

It’s important that you’re relaxed and comfortable

When you’re in the water with your child, they will take their cues from you, just as they do every day. If you are happy and smiling, ready to listen and learn, they will be too. However, if you are showing signs of anxiety, tension or frustration, or it looks as though you’re not confident or disinterested, your child will respond to your negative emotions.

It sounds simple, but if you are not confident in the water you will need to pretend to be, so your child can concentrate on learning. If you need help, your instructor can show you the best ways to overcome anxieties.

Learning from your instructor

Your instructor will explain why they are doing each task. Understanding the reasons behind their actions will help you teach the task to your child. You’ll find that talking during class and repeating important points to emphasise them is an important part of this process.

Every activity is a step on the ladder.

Sometimes it may seem as though the classes are hard to follow, or that progress seems to be going sideways! If you find yourself thinking like this, don’t worry. Every activity has a reason and purpose, it’s part of a proven learning strategy, with programmed activities that build from Bub’s level to Tot’s level to Dipper’s - and all the way to squad kids!

Because each activity builds on those before it, it’s important to try to master every one and resist the temptation to skip one if your child doesn’t like it.

The importance of repetition

In swimming, like other physical skills, practice makes perfect. Repetition is so important in the early years as muscle memories develop and grow. Most parents find that practising the skill once a week is not enough to learn at the pace they would like. The answer is simple. Ask for a homework sheet at reception and follow it so you can teach your child to practise in the bath at home. This will help your child progress steadily and give them (and you) a sense of accomplishment and achievement.

Don’t wait to ask for help

If your child is struggling with a skill, and practise in the bath at home or the local pool doesn’t seem to be helping, ask us sooner rather than later. Our instructors will give you tips and advice on the best way to tackle any little obstacles.

Children all learn in different ways and different paces, so if you think your child is not ready for an activity or isn’t doing it correctly, please ask us for other options. Your instructor will show you alternative way to achieve the same goal.



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Setting a good example

Listening to your instructor is vital. It is important that you know exactly what they want you to do and that you can do it correctly. The techniques, the holds and the way we ask you to do things have been researched, tried and tested and proven to work.

Listening, learning and copying the techniques you are shown will not only help your child’s physical skills but also make them more confident in the water. Listening is a learnt skill, so as a parent you need to set the example and your child will listen too.

Keeping up with the class

It’s important that you keep up with the progress of the rest of the class. Trying to do the activities together helps your child see what needs to be done and gives them the chance to see other children doing it too. Try not to get distracted and fall behind, or do your own thing.

Keeping the class together is a more efficient way to learn. You’ll have individual time during circuit time when you and your child can explore on your own and repeat the activities you prefer.

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The benefits of regular attendance

If your child is sick, it is best to keep them at home until they are well, but consistent attendance will make classes more enjoyable and help you child learn and improve at their best pace.

It’s a worthwhile journey to gain lifelong skills

We’ve found that the happiest children have parents that are enjoying themselves while listening and helping their children to master the skills of becoming confident and safe in the water. However, like most things in life, it’s not always a smooth and easy journey, it can take persistence and commitment, from you and your child, to reach your goals. But, be assured, all that is soon forgotten and the result is worth the effort!

