

"BABY AND ME" SWIMMING TIPS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Our "Baby and Me" swimming programmes are an opportunity for mum (dad or caregiver) and child to learn together in a warm, nurturing environment. The classes are full with games, songs and introduce the child to basic skills including floating, breathe control and balance, which are important building blocks in preparing your baby towards more structured skills and learning.

Here are some tips to help your child transition to lessons happily and confidently....

- **Starting With The Basics.....**

We start the lessons with "Foundation Skills" which are the basic building blocks of swimming. These skills are repeated each and every lesson as repetition is the key to retaining these skills. Missing these "building blocks" can impact on the "processing" of the task. Just like building a wall, solid foundations must be made to build on.

- **Be on time for your lessons.....**

Give you and your child a chance to relax before the lesson. Arriving late to a class not only disrupts the flow of the class but also does not give your child time to prepare themselves emotionally for their swim. Initially children may show resistance to the lessons – they may need longer to "suss" out the environment and become ready for their lessons. Leave them time to do this. They will decide in good time, and they will love lessons even more if they have been allowed to decide themselves when they are ready.

- **Encouragement.....**

Give praise. It is their reward. Make it sincere and from the heart. By giving loads of encouragement, you help to build your child's social skills and self esteem. This also sets the foundation for a lifelong, happy, trusting relationship. . Let your child know you are proud of every task they attempt.

- **Be gentle.....**

Use slow movements. Always be ready to cuddle. Don't ask your child if they want to do something. Instead use a calm voice to let them know what the next activity will be. Don't hesitate – it causes confusion and makes the child unsure of what's going on. Your child will establish trust when we follow through with a task. Your teacher will discuss what comes next to eliminate any surprises.....Trust is a must.....

- **Keep trying.....don't give up.....**

Parents and caregivers must realise, learning to be comfortable in the water takes time and patience and can not be achieved overnight. However with time and patience all children will develop a life long love of the water and have gained a gift for life.

- **Toileting Your Child.....**

Please ensure you toilet your child before lessons. Going to the toilet during the lesson may disrupt the class and their learning.

- **Food and Drink.....**

Please do not feed your children immediately before the class. Allow 30 minutes prior to exercise for food to digest. Children who are learning to hold their breath or submerge may swallow air which can "repeat" newly digested food....!

Please don't compare me.....

Let them progress at a pace that is right for them. It's unfair to compare the progress of your child with other children. It is not unusual for them to reach different stages at similar ages. This can make a huge difference initially, but rest assured with time and practice all children can learn to swim.

What to bring.....

- You need swimming togs for yourself and your baby. Please ensure your babies swim pants fit well around the legs and that you only use approved swim nappies. These are available for purchase from reception.
- Bring at least two towels for your baby as it is amazing how wet everything can become.
- Make sure your baby wears socks and a hat after lessons to retain their core body temperature (especially in the winter months).
- Swimming for your baby is extremely energetic work. Baby will most likely be hungry and thirsty when the lessons are over, so bring something for them to eat and drink while you get yourself changed.

