



## Swim Lesson Parent Frequently Asked Questions

**Welcome to the YMCA Upgraded Swim Lesson program! We are excited to have you here.**

**Arrival Time:** It is important to be on deck and ready to go 5 minutes before your class is scheduled to begin. Before arriving on deck, be sure you are early enough to make sure your child uses the restroom before class. Children can get anxious if hurried. For safety reasons, please do not allow your children to sit poolside unless the instructor is present at the wall.

**Swimming Attire:** Most bathing suits and swim trunks are acceptable. We ask that you make sure that your child's swimwear fits snugly so it will not hinder any movement. Children should not attend swim lessons with any built-in floatations. If you are concerned that your child gets too cold while in the water, you can look into purchasing a thermal swim suit. Check out our website at [www.siyymca.org](http://www.siyymca.org) to see suit suggestions and websites to shop for such suggested suits.

**Swim Caps:** If your child is prone to chill, a swim cap may help. We welcome and encourage this! For swimmers with long hair, we ask that it is tied back away from the face so not to interfere with learning to breath. \*No metal clips please- they can fall out and cause rust stains on our pool bottom.

**Ear plugs/Nose clips:** If you are considering using either of these as an aid for your young swimmer, please first discuss it with your instructor. Sometimes using these accessories can be more of a hindrance than an aid. This may need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Goggles:** For beginning swimmers, goggles can present a false sense of safety. If your swimmer feels they need goggles, they may bring them; however, for safety reasons a portion of lessons will be spent encouraging participants to be comfortable without goggles.

**Cancellation/Sick Policy:** Children who have been ill should be kept at home. This is in the best interest of their health as well as other class participants and their instructor. In order to maintain the integrity of our classes in regards to content and to size, we do not offer make-ups. We have found that adding swimmers to classes for make-ups disrupts the rhythm, safety and integrity of the class. Please do your best to attend! Sorry, no make-ups for illnesses, recitals, vacations, etc. If a class is cancelled by the instructor, the instructor will schedule a make-up lesson before the end of the current program session. Not attending a make-up class will not entitle you to a refund or credit, please do your best to attend.

**Where should I go to watch my child's lesson?:** We have two options for those wanting to observe swimmers in lessons. You can sit in our observation area which is not on the pool deck or you can sit on our white benches on the pool deck. Should you choose to sit on our pool deck, be prepared for a very warm and humid environment. Whichever option you choose, you may discover after a lesson or two, that it could be more beneficial for your child to change where you may be sitting. Some children do better knowing their parents are close at hand, while others do better knowing their parent isn't sitting so close. This will only be discovered after participating in a lesson or two. From an instructor stand point, we appreciate it when parents are visible during lessons, whether that's on the pool deck or in the observation area, in case of any behavioral issues a parent could assist the instructor with, or when a child may need to use the restroom. If the instructor has a

suggestion as to where they believe it would be best for you to sit after working with your swimmer, they will certainly discuss that with you.

**How long will it take for my child to learn how to swim?:** The YMCA uses a developmental series of steps in a natural progression working towards mastering the following skills: water adjustment, buoyancy, body position, arm and leg development, forward movement and ending with stroke technique. In general, each child's readiness is influenced by physical development, previous experience and behavioral maturity. The most important thing to remember is to never compare your child's progress to another child. All children are different and we need to let them learn at their own comfort level. It also depends on what you are looking to get out of the lessons. If you want your child to learn competitive swim techniques, that will take longer than if you want your child to learn basic water safety skills. On average, our typical student could be in the beginner stage for 3 to 12 months.

**If my child is progressing well through the stages and they have met the goals I had in place for them, is it necessary to keep them in the program until all stages are completed?** Once a child learns how to swim there are many advantages to keeping them in an ongoing swim program. That ongoing program could be completing all stages offered in our swim lesson program, but it could also be joining the Stingray swim team. Once a swimmer turns 15 years old, they can take part in a lifeguard course and possibly gain employment here at the Y, or they could pursue a job in teaching swim lessons themselves. Keeping swimmers involved in swimming can offer a lifelong skills and an incredible way to stay healthy.

**Is my child in the right stage?:** On the first day of every swim lesson, we are evaluating proper stage placement. For some, it may take time for a swimmer to warm up and build a relationship with a new instructor. After time has been given for a swimmer to adjust to their new instructor, should the instructor determine a swimmer has been placed in a specific stage in error, the instructor will discuss this with you and the Aquatics Director and will do their best to offer an adequate solution.

**Why do I see my child playing or sitting on the side when they should be learning to swim?** Unlike other swim programs, we pride ourselves in teaching the basic building blocks of swimming through four additional components including: character development, personal safety, rescue and water sports and games. We see play as an important part of learning for children. Through games your child will gain considerable knowledge and skill development by staying engaged. We also set aside time to discuss and incorporate character values: caring, respect, responsibility, honesty and Faith in God. Our goal is to develop a well-rounded swimmer, not just one with perfect technique.

**Why does my child wear floatations when they can swim on their own?** We use instructional floatation devices (IFD's) as teaching tools to help children focus on mastering arm and leg movement. Using IFD's give our swimmer the freedom to concentrate on their stroke development without having to maintain their own floatation. With our newest upgrade to our swim lesson program, you will probably see instructors use IFD's less and less, but they could be used from time to time due to the benefits they provide.

**Why does my child work on the same things every day?** Repetition is the key to learning for most young children. Repeating games and skills give children something to look forward to. Swim

lesson participants also feel a greater sense of success by mastering a skill they have been replicating.

**What do I do if my child is crying or won't get in the water?** Rest assured that it is not unusual to see tears and hear crying. Most often children experience fear due to separation anxiety or the overwhelming feeling caused by the pool environment. We ask that you trust our staff in helping your children overcome their fear. With your permission, an instructor may be comfortable pushing your child a little, but there is a fine line between pushing too hard and causing a greater fear, and helping a child realize there is nothing to be afraid of. Our instructors have seen both situations and have developed the ability to know when they can push a little harder and when we may have to say a child simply isn't ready yet. No matter the decision of the instructor, they will be sure to discuss all situations with you and make sure you and your swimmer are getting the best instruction and communication possible.

**What do I do if my child is misbehaving?** Not all disciplinary problems are addressed and taken care of by our instructors. We use positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate class behavior such as self-identification of the problem, warnings and time-outs. If our instructor does not have success with this approach we may approach you in an effort to find a better method that is more effective for your child. We ask that you teach, talk about and review appropriate class behavior and pool rules with your child. We encourage parents to lead by example and to help children understand "respect" for the water, classmates, and instructors.

**What can I do to ensure my child will learn to swim and advance from one stage to another?** We do not establish passing or failing a stage as our primary definition of success. Failing does not apply to swim lessons as children are always making improvements. We consider learning to swim as a never ending process and as a chance to help encourage motor, language and social skills as well as emotional development. The rate at which a child progresses through our program is largely based on the amount of time spent working on skills outside of class. We strongly encourage families to enjoy swim time outside of class time. This will reinforce what is learned in class and help children become more comfortable in the environment they will be using to learn how to swim.

**Can my child/family swim before/after swim lessons?** It is strongly encouraged to help your children in their swimming by swimming more frequently than just at their swim lessons. Even those who are not members of our Y can purchase a family day pass and come swimming during our open swim times. Use caution allowing your swimmers to swim before and after class. Here are some things to be aware of when considering to allow a child to swim before/after their lessons...

- Will swimming before their lesson cause them to run out of energy before their lesson is over?
- A child could be very tired after a swim lesson, so be very cautious about allowing children to swim after their lesson. This could be a recipe for a dangerous situation.
- Be aware of our pool rules. Children age 5 and under are not permitted to swim without a parent with them in the water. Sitting on the side of the pool is not considered adequate supervision for a child under the age of 6 years old.

**Are private lessons better than group lessons?** It is our experience that children will progress more quickly and have more fun in small groups of two to four students. This small group encourages fun, competition, peer interaction and often give students a visual model of the skills. However, if you prefer private lessons we are happy to try to accommodate you. There are a few situations when we could recommend that you register for private lessons versus a group lesson:

- If your child takes to the water and learns the skills very quickly and we have to move your child twice because he/she surpasses the ability of their classmates, your child's progress might benefit more from private lessons.
- If your child has special needs and/or will need a great deal of attention, a private class may be better for their progress.
- If your child struggles to keep up with a regularly scheduled class, a series of private lessons to get them caught up might be in order.

**Do private lessons expire once they are purchased?** Yes, private lessons will expire at the end of each program session. All make-up classes must be completed by the end of the session, classes will not be carried over from one program session to another. For more details about make-up classes, please refer to our sick/cancellation policy above.

**Any other questions, please contact the Aquatics Director at (812) 934-6006 ext: 256 or [kfletcher@siymca.org](mailto:kfletcher@siymca.org).**