



## Lesson Guidelines

NEVER CONSIDER A CHILD WATER SAFE OR "DROWN PROOFED!" ALL CHILDREN SHOULD BE CAREFULLY SUPERVISED WHEN IN OR AROUND WATER NO MATTER HOW MUCH TRAINING THEY HAVE RECEIVED.

### HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR LESSONS?

- All children under the age of 4 must wear a snugly fitting reusable swim diaper during lessons (you will receive a complementary one upon registration).
- Please dress your child in the swim diaper. Swimsuits are optional.
- Please arrive 10-15 minutes before your scheduled time to allow your child to use the restroom, fix hair, etc., without rushing them. :)
- Children with long hair: please braid, tie back, use barrettes or a swim cap.
- Please bring 2 towels for each child to lessons.

### DIETARY GUIDELINES

- **Do not feed your child any food or beverages for at least 2 hours preceding his/her lesson.**
- **Do not allow fruit, vegetables, meat or dairy products for at least 6 hours prior to the lesson.**
- Up to 2 hours prior to the lesson: child can have breast milk, Rice Dream, water, toast and cereal (without fruit or nuts). Basically light, easily digestible carbs.
- Some children swallow excess air and a little bit of water during lessons, which leads to stomach distension. In order to breathe well, I must burp the child.
- If there's food or liquid in the stomach, they will come up with the burp in the pool. The pool filtration system will clear the pool quickly, so if this happens to your child, do not be frightened or distressed. This happens to some children regardless and is not anything to worry about, but controlling feedings just before the lessons will help. You can usually expect an increase in appetite and longer naps as a result of this exercise.

## **HOW SOON CAN I EXPECT MY CHILD TO LEARN TO SWIM?**

Each child progresses at a different pace, has a different personality, and is at a different stage of development and coordination. Some will be very quick to acquire new skills, and others who may have a fear of water or who have learned ineffective behaviors in the water (e.g., flotation device use or blowing bubbles) may take a little more time.

Personality also plays a key factor in learning. An instructor will not rush a child nor allow the parents to do so. Usually babies 12-24 months are doing very well after 4-5 weeks of lessons. Older children typically progress more quickly than these younger babies, particularly children over 4 years who receive 20-minute private lessons. Younger infants (6-12 months) who are “floaters” take less time initially (3-4 weeks) because they are learning only a part of the swim-float-swim sequence. Expect to spend between 4-6 weeks of lessons after your floater turns a year and is walking, depending upon individual development. Please note: there is an additional charge for private lessons to teach floaters the swim-float-swim sequence.

Whatever the case, we teach each student with a gentle and encouraging approach, recognizing that each child is uniquely different. Your child may learn one skill quickly and then it may take longer to acquire another skill. Like dance, sports skills or learning a musical instrument, learning to swim is a process that must be nurtured and developed over time. It is a motor skill that will improve with consistent exposure, repetition and practice. You may also notice that your child will learn some skills quickly and then be hesitant to learn anything new. This is perfectly normal for children (and adults, too!). Once a child has accomplished a skill, they will want to do it again and again. Just as we would, he/she feels secure, confident, and proud of their accomplishments. Rest assured that acquisition of new skills and allowing your child to feel confident with his/her ability in the water will be kept in balance throughout the learning process.

## **WHAT IF MY CHILD CRIES DURING LESSONS?**

It is important to note that there are different reasons for crying and different degrees of crying. A certain amount of crying or complaining is to be expected from most beginners and is not cause for concern. At first, your child may show some reluctance. A positive attitude from parents and caretakers will go a long way in reassuring a reluctant child. You will see that as skills are developed, your child will settle into the lesson routine and may very well begin to enjoy his/her newfound skills. Our instructors use a variety of methods so that each child gains trust in the instructor and in the lesson process.

Important: We believe no child should be subjected to a fearful or intimidating learning environment. However, it is unrealistic to say that children never cry during swimming lessons. Many times, these young children are experiencing separation anxiety. In some instances, babies may become tired or hungry during the lesson, and sometimes they may cry as a means of complaining about having to work in the water. Frequently they cry because they are learning new skills, which they have yet to master. These cries are very different from a fearful cry, and our instructors are in tune to those differences. It is important for parents to offer enthusiastic support, not sympathy, for their child's efforts and hard work.

## WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS A MEDICAL CONDITION?

If you believe your child has any medical condition that might reasonably affect his/her safe participation in lessons, please explain the condition on the registration form. A written clearance signed by a doctor may be needed prior to your child starting lessons.

## WHAT IF MY CHILD IS AFRAID OF THE WATER?

Some of the more common causes of early fear of the water have to do with the way parents or caregivers relate to children in and around water. Being involved in water activities before being properly skilled, having parents who are afraid of the water and who have either knowingly or unknowingly communicated this fear to their children, being raised in an environment that prohibits childhood water play, whether as a result of lack of opportunity or parental actions, and experiencing or witnessing a traumatic water incident can all cause very valid fears in young children. Because we understand this, we commit to be relaxed, patient, and understanding toward your child, provide a reasonable amount of control to a frightened child, and create a positive learning environment with praise, toys and activities that promote the learn-to-swim process.

## LATE OR MISSED LESSONS

- Initial swimming lessons are approximately 10 minutes in length, 4 days per week, (Monday-Thursday) for children under 4 years of age, and 20 minutes in length, four days per week for children over the age of 4.
- Since your lessons are short, it is helpful if you arrive 10-15 minutes before your scheduled time. This allows sufficient time to have your child ready (e.g., use the restroom, pull hair back, put on a swim diaper) to go into the water at the scheduled time.
- If you are late, the instructor will try to fit you in whenever possible, but your lesson time might be shortened. **Consistency is a very important ingredient of the program. Steady attendance will increase your child's rate of progress.**

- While Friday makeups are offered in the event of an instructor's absence or inclement weather, you are paying for your spot whether you come to lessons or not. The instructor typically can't offer makeups for lessons missed due to student illness or travel, but rest assured, we will not complete your child's lessons until they are fully skilled, even if it takes longer than 6 weeks.

## POSITIVE FEEDBACK

It is critical to bring a positive attitude to each lesson. We can teach your child skills, but it is your support that will most affect his/her attitude and progress. Children do much better when parents are involved and cheer as they acquire and develop new skills. It is also important to know the appropriate time to clap and cheer. Sometimes what the instructor is looking for during lessons is different from what might look good to you. If we together show approval for the same things, it will help your child feel successful and increase his/her chances of correct swimming behavior.

**For privacy reasons, videotaping of lessons is prohibited without express permission.** It is fine for you to videotape to share with family, but please consult with me before posting to social media. There are safety concerns with people thinking they can learn these techniques by watching. Remember your instructor went through more than 200 hours of hands on learning for 6 weeks to be able to safely teach babies and young children the proper techniques.

## COST & PAYMENT

- \$100 registration (one time, non-refundable); \$50 per add'l student if swimming at same time; includes neoprene washable swim diaper.
- 4-week rollback-to-float (ages 6-12 months), four 10-minute lessons/week (Mon-Thurs): \$400 JCC members, \$440 non-members
- 6-week swim-float-swim (walking up to 4 years), four 10-minute lessons/week (Mon-Thurs): \$600 JCC members, \$660 non-members
- 3-week swim-float-swim (4-6 years old), four 20-minute lessons/week: \$600 JCC members, \$660 non-members
- You will need to pay the one-time registration fee of \$100 (non-refundable) at the time of registration to reserve your spot.
- The rest of the session fees are due the Friday prior to the start of lessons. **Once your child begins lessons, your session payment is due and non-refundable.** If you need an alternate payment plan or are interested in need-based swim scholarships, please let Erin know.
- Please note: once infants who have completed the float sequence are walking, they return to private lessons to master the swim-float-swim sequence. This

typically requires an additional 4-6 weeks of daily lessons in order to learn the swim-float-swim sequence.

## **MAKEUP LESSONS**

- Once your child begins lessons, you are expected to pay for the 6-week program of 10-minute lessons (4 weeks for infant floaters) or 3-week program of 20-minute lessons for children ages 4-6 years.
- In the event of inclement weather, instructor illness, or a holiday, a makeup lesson will be offered on that Friday. In the event that your child is sick, we will of course add time on if needed to finish them up. This program is about your child's success, not a timeline!

## **REFUNDS**

Please do not start your child in this program unless you fully intend to complete the entire learning process. Once your child begins lessons, the balance of your tuition is non-refundable if you withdraw your child. The reason for this firm financial responsibility is the initial training period is a very critical time of adaptation to a new environment, instructor, and technique for you and your child. It can be a time of very low self-confidence in the water because the child has not had time to acquire and perfect his/her skills in the aquatic environment. If the child's lessons are terminated during this time, the foremost thing the child will remember about the water is that lack of self-confidence in and around water. One of our instructors' specialties is working with children with water fear problems, and we do not want to be involved in putting a child in that situation. Therefore, make sure that this program is for you (we know it is for your child) before you register, then stay with it and support your child in every way until he/she is skilled and ready to participate in group classes.

## **ABOUT ERIN LOEWE, OWNER/LEAD INSTRUCTOR**

My name is Erin Loewe, and although I have a background in journalism, I love teaching young children how to swim. I actually grew up watching my mother teach as a survival swim instructor in our pool in Orlando, but I never thought I would have the opportunity to do it myself until my son went through the program at 2. After watching other children's lessons and asking many questions, I knew that I wanted to become an instructor to help other children become safer in and around the water.

I originally certified with Infant Swimming Resource in Florida in 2007, and since then, I have taught hundreds of children how to swim-float-swim and become

aquatic problem solvers in Tallahassee, Nashville, and now Richmond, VA. I was introduced to Infant Aquatics after moving to the Richmond area, and I decided to observe some lessons. I then realized how much more there was to learn and how I could become an even better instructor to my little swimmers!

In September 2020, I decided to build upon my skill set and traveled to Colorado for four weeks of intensive training to obtain a bridge certification with Judy Heumann, founder of [Infant Aquatics](#). I am blown away by how effective the Infant Aquatics method is and how it augments what I already know (and thus, what your children will learn!). Through the process of learning survival swimming skills, your child will have a foundation for a lifetime of enjoyment, respect and safety around the water! I'm so excited about providing expanded survival swim offerings to serve even more families in the near future.

## **CONTACT AND LINKS**

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Erin. We want this program to be a positive experience for everyone involved!

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**Links:** [www.StarfishInfantAquatics.com](http://www.StarfishInfantAquatics.com); [www.InfantAquatics.com](http://www.InfantAquatics.com)

**Facebook:** [@ErinLoeweStarfishInfantAquatics](#)

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