

LEARNING

TIPS

8 Top Tips for parents on learn to swim.

1. Time in the water

Just like learning to walk or to crawl, learning to swim is a loco motor skill that requires lots of time and practice to achieve. A child having just one half hour lesson each week for 52 weeks of the year will only accrue 26 hours of swim lesson time over a year. The more time children spend in the water the quicker they will learn to swim.

2. Not negotiable

Learning to swim is like wearing a seat belt or a bike helmet. Until you can swim it's simply not negotiable. Children don't have the maturity to understand they are at risk around water. Provided parents are comfortable with the teaching methods used at their swim school and the children are treated with respect, then they need to have the courage of their conviction that learning to swim is an important priority.

3. Reinforce the skills

Not just with swimming, but any loco motor skill needs to be practiced over and over to be remembered. This can seem monotonous and sometimes children might say they don't want to learn to swim anymore. Feel confident that they are only being asked to persevere for such a small amount of time. Learning to stick with something rather than giving up too easily is a very healthy life lesson.

4. How much skill is enough?

Having the ability to swim around a backyard pool doesn't necessarily mean a child is strong enough to cope in an unfamiliar or stressful situation. Swimming ability can deteriorate rapidly under stress, the more skilled the child in the first place the greater the chances of survival.

5. Comfort and security matters

It's really hard for kids to concentrate and learn if they feel anxious, frightened or uncomfortable. Do all you can to ensure children feel secure and comfortable enough for easy learning to take place.

6. Be supportive

Learning to swim is not so easy for most people. Children will be more likely to persevere and become more confident if those around them encourage and support their efforts.

7. Play

Don't underestimate the value of play in developing water confidence and a feel for the water. Playing in water will help children understand buoyancy and how to move effortlessly through the water.

8. Be patient!

If there is a last word on swimming then it has to be to encourage parents to exercise patience! If children only swim once each week it's going to feel like a very long time before they can swim. In the long run the total time spent at swim lessons is probably less than just one week of a child's life. Parents need to relax, enjoy the experience and know that they are doing something very, very good (and healthy) for their child.

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