

Waterbabies: why teach baby to swim?

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Waterbabies, laughter and learning to swim ... an unbeatable combination!

The benefits of baby-friendly infant/toddler swimming are unique and uplifting, and contribute to the positive development of the whole child.

Researchers have documented that the stimulating effect of child-paced infant and toddler swimming lessons has the potential to increase intelligence, concentration, alertness, and perceptual abilities. Improvement in social, emotional and physical development has also been published. Of course, the manifestation of such inspired cognitive, personal and motor development takes time, patience and repetition.

Through the soothing medium of water, children are able to experience its caressing and stimulating effect. Water's buoyancy is like an invisible helping hand. Zero gravity allows for freedoms that do not exist on land. The water provides a special time and place for you and your child.

Early swim lessons set a positive foundation towards a lifetime of participation and enjoyment in a variety of water sports. With Mom and Dad as co-teachers in the pool, baby can learn to relate to the water with ease and confidence. Infants as young as six months can begin to rediscover the liquid environment they left behind in the womb.

8 reasons to teach baby to swim

1. Human infants are well adapted to swimming. When submerged, they automatically hold their breath and make swimming movements. These reflex behaviours begin to fade as early as three months of age and need to be revived.
2. Babies can exercise more muscles in water than on land. They are less restricted by gravity and their ability to sit or stand. This increased strength often manifests itself in early acquisition of physical skills such as walking.
3. Early mastery of water movement gives children a head start in learning the basic swimming skills. Stroke instruction can begin as early as three years for children who have had the proper preparation.
4. Water helps to improve coordination and balance by allowing babies to move bilaterally to maintain their equilibrium.
5. Warm water, combined with gentle exercise, relaxes and stimulates babies appetites. They usually eat and sleep better on swim days.
6. Babies flourish in the atmosphere of focused attention that their parents lavish on them during swim time. Parents often confess that the lessons provide the only time they can spend 30 pleasurable, uninterrupted minutes with their babies. Swimming provides babies with lots of skin-to-skin contact with their parents. That, psychologists say, deepens the bond between parent and child.
7. As babies learn how to maneuver in the water on their own, their independence and self-confidence blossoms. This is evident by the ear-to-ear grins stretching across their faces.
8. Learning to swim is not only a fun-filled and healthy activity, but it can save a life. All children should learn how to swim to greatly reduce their chances of a water accident and to prevent the paralyzing effects of fear and panic if they fall into the water.