

# Swimming is a Life Skill

## **Routine Swimming—Creating 'Muscle-Memories'**

Swimming is an important skill to master, it is also a difficult skill to master—ask any adult learning to swim.

Every child is different and all swimmers will progress at different rates.

Some children will ride a bike with ease, and others will struggle with balance, peddling and steering. Swimming is no different—kicking, arms, breathing.

Children learn through repetition so it is important that your child can attend their lesson every week. For some children twice a week is necessary.

Pre-school children are little sponges absorbing knowledge and developing their fine motor skills everyday. By attending weekly swim instruction, they are helping train their bodies and memories in the necessary skills to learn to swim. We want the children to come the pool and have their 'muscle-memories' come into play when an instructor asks them to do something—it needs to become automatic.

School-Age swimmers have a greater motor control and concentration span, so building on their foundation muscle-memories we are able to refine their skill and build their strength in the water.

Swimming skills are not like soccer or netball where children can practise at home with a ball, goal or hoop—time in the water with a qualified instructor repeating level-specific exercises is best.

Although as a parent you may feel your child is 'confident' in their local or backyard pool, collecting toys from the bottom, jumping, bombing etc, they are not working on body position, buoyancy, correct stroke, kick and breathing — the skills necessary to become a good swimmer that can get themselves out of trouble.

By missing lessons, or taking entire terms off, this impacts on a child being able to recall a skill when they return to the water after a break. We encourage swimming to continue during the winter months. The pool temperature is raised and we have nice hot showers on site.

Learning to Swim is a compulsory part of the national school curriculum, however there are less and less school pools these days and the skills taught are more to do with water safety than learning to swim.

The best thing you can do for your child is to ensure that swimming is a compulsory extra curricular activity.

## **Need a Boost?**

An intensive course over the holiday period is a fantastic way to progress, as your child is repeating the skills on a daily basis.

We are taking registrations for our Holiday Program in the April School Holiays. Week Monday April 28th—Friday May 2nd. A half hour class each day.

## **Helpful Home Tips**

For a nervous child who is struggling with submersion and water over their heads, you can help by:

- Encouraging showers at home with goggles on
- Using a straw to take a 'big breath' and blow long, slow, bubbles through the straw
- Explore the bottom of the bath with goggles on

Please feel free to discuss any concerns you have with our Poolside Supervisors who are trained to deal with the specialised needs of your child.

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