



HELP YOUR CHILD ENJOY THE WATER

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Almost every parent in the United States is concerned, at one time or another, about his child learning to swim. Most parents try to help their child become a swimmer. Often well meaning parents hinder rather than aid their child's progress in the water.

WHAT AGE SHOULD MY CHILD BE?

More children learn faster between the ages of eight and eleven than any other age because of interest and physical development. However a great many of them learn between the ages of six and eight. The group from six to eight is not as well coordinated and it will take them longer to make progress in movement. Six is a very good age to start them in overcoming their fear of water.

WHY ARE CHILDREN AFRAID OF WATER?

There are two reasons for fear of water. First of all, swimming is the only activity where the participant moves horizontally instead of vertically. Secondly, on some strokes you must control your breathing — exhale when your face is in the water and inhale when it is out.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

The first way a parent may help his child is by getting in the water with him. The child should be allowed to get in only as deep as he wished to go as long as it is not over his head. Get in and stay close but never force your child. Secondly, compliment any type of improvement. There is nothing a child enjoys more than sincere praise from his parents. Thirdly, remember after you start that some days he will do much better than others. You must have an abundance of Patience. If you become discouraged do not let your child see it.

FIRST STEPS:

After you get your child in and used to the water the next thing is to take steps to get his face in the water. Notice in the pictures that the beginner is chest deep in water. Do the first three steps with him.

1. Wash your face with him and emphasize blowing bubbles.
2. This time lower his hands just under the surface and have him blow into them.

Next place hands on knees and blow bubbles by bending and putting the head in the water. The three things mentioned must be accomplished before proceeding. Your child may do these the first day or it may take a week or two. Remember *never* to force him but encourage—also remember one day he may do it and the next he may not.

ON THE FACE:

3. Now take his hands and ask him to:
 - A. Put his face in the water and blow
 - B. Kick up and down
4. Stand in front of him and let him try this by himself, but be sure to be there to catch him and help him regain his balance. To regain his balance tell him to bend his knees and raise his head.

Notice in the pictures that the older person stands in front of the child—*never* beside or supporting him around the waist. A child will become tired of doing this after he becomes efficient at it. Let him play some games: going through your legs, blowing a ping pong ball along the water, counting fingers under the water, playing leap frog in the water, etc.

ON THE BACK:

Always stand behind the child.

5. Put both hands under the child's shoulders:
 - A. Tell him to look at you (by doing this it will help get his head back).
 - B. Tell him to lie rather than sit, arch his back (chest out), and relax, keep his feet together, arms straight out.

Have the child move his arms straight down to his side—then straight out again. This gives continual support plus movement. Then remove one hand from his back.
6. Place only one finger in middle of his back then no support. Remember to emphasize straight arm movement.

It may take several days to get your child to do this. If you can accomplish the above your child will be over his fear of the water and some day soon he will be a swimmer.