**Prepare your child to swim step by step**

I have recognized a pattern in my 23 years of experience in the swimming school industry that children near and over the age of three can learn to swim and be much safer around the water within 12 lessons. My promise to you is if you practice the skills I will teach in these video’s you will no longer feel frustrated that your child isn't making progress even if we can’t help you personally at the Swim Lesson Club USA.

It’s very important to begin orientating your child to the water as early as 6 months. Babies are born with a swimming reflex that begins to dissipate at 6 months. This reflex is a natural reaction to submersion and the baby will instinctively hold their breath as well kick their feet. Babies can’t actually swim, however, you can condition behaviors that will help orientate them to the water and increase their chances of surviving an accidental submersion. I will show you how to prepare a child of any age for swimming lessons and how to practice.

Remember, drowning is still a leading cause of death or severe injury for children under the age of 5, diligence around any water is paramount. Also, many children are traumatized by forceful lessons or near drowning events. Never turn your back on a child when you are in a pool or near any water. No matter how safe your child seems to be in the water don’t have a false sense of security

Your child will be as comfortable in the water as you are.

Don’t practice swimming with a student if you are scared of the water yourself.

It’s important to work with a skilled instructor that can help teach you the skills necessary to effectively work with your kids in the water. The key to instilling behaviors that can save your baby's life and help them learn to swim faster is consistent practice as a parent outside of a lesson environment. I am going to teach you four skills to teach that will help a child learn to swim quickly. Are you ready to get started?

 **Skills to practice outside of swim lessons**

**Safety First:** The first behavior your child must master is to never enter the water or jump of a wall unless they have been cued to enter. Always, count to three before entering the water. Always, work from the stairs or wall and have your child turn back to where the started . You want to condition your child to return to the wall or stairs after they swim to you.

Step 1 Preparation for underwater swimming: **1, 2, 3** **Pour water on the face**

* Begin with small amounts using small amounts of water and progress to cups and buckets of water. Pour the water after counting to 3, the water should run over the crown of the head and over the child's mouth. With older children that have some fear of water you should begin pours on the back of the head and over ears before the face pours. You can teach older children growling and humming to keep water out of the nose and mouth.

Step 2 Orientation to the buoyancy of the water:  **Let your child float in your hands**

* Hold your child under their arms and let them float in your hands with their shoulders in the water. Keep your child in the prone position with their legs behind, don’t let them crawl or stand up while practicing swimming.

Step 3 Back float: **Your child's head should rest on your shoulder**

* Back floating is an essential swimming safety skill, however, most children are reluctant to stay on their backs. Start with the students head resting on your shoulder and begin to sing with the student or count. The child should be sitting up with their head on your shoulder when you begin the backfloat. Slowly dip back with your child and when the sit up don’t hold them down, sit them up and do it again the same way.

Step 4 Underwater swimming

* Underwater preparation cueing transition to submersion. After you count to three you gently submerge the child completely underwater then return to the surface. Cuing can be done with lifting and you can also blow in the child face before submersion. Go over more advanced submersion techniques. Cue techniques: Lifts and blowing in the face. You should ever force a child underwater younger children will never fight, however, as they get older and develop anxiety they will. With children reluctant to go under then you must get them to growl or hum into the water before you help them under the water.

Let’s review, always condition safe behavior.

Don’t allow your student to enter the water or jump of a wall unless they have been cued to enter. Count to 3 before entering the water and everytime you leave the stairs or wall. Make sure to turn the child right back to where they started every time!

1 Hold your child in a way that allows them to feel the buoyancy of the water. Small children under the arms and older children by the hand and glide arms.

2 Never too much water pouring when you are practicing. Teach exhaling underwater with humming or growling and look up to the sky to catch a cloud.

3 Back floating use the cheek to cheek and make sure to support the students head with your shoulder. Don’t fight when they attempt to sit up. Just redirect and try it again.

4 Use the lifting method and counting to prepare a child to swim underwater. Make sure to hold the child under their arms lift high and slowly and consistently go underwater on three. Never force a child underwater.

Most importantly have fun. Do you feel like you can practice swimming with your kids now?

**Step 1** Begin with small amounts using small amounts of water and progress to cups and buckets of water. Pour the water after counting to 3

**Step 2** Hold your child under their arms and let them float in your hands with their shoulders in the water. Keep your child in the prone position with their legs behind

**Step 3** Back float - Start with the students head resting on your shoulder and begin to sing with the student or count.

**Step 4** Underwater swimming - Cue techniques

**Fear of Water Elimination**

**Step 1** Preparation for underwater swimming: **1, 2, 3** **Pour water on the face**

Growl in the water

Quick breaths

Bobs

**Step 2** Orientation to the buoyancy of the water

Use the steps to lift your legs behind you

Take one hand off the steps then switch

Use a noodle to become comfortable with you legs off the bottom

**Step 3** Underwater swimming

Glide to the stairs face in the water

Glide to the stairs while exhaling underwater

**Step 4**  Find an instructor you trust to assist you to transition into swimming

You will need to work in shallow water at all times

Begin to use arm strokes and kicking while maintaining a prone position

Finally you will be working toward exhaling underwater and looking up to take a pop up breath