



## No choice if your child can't swim.

I often hear parents, when they phone up to book in for swimming lessons ask their toddler if they want to go swimming and if the toddler answers "NO" then the parent does not book the child in to the swim school so the child can start their Personal Aquatic Survival Skill development (learn to swim).

Of course children need to be taught to make choices and as a parent I feel very strongly that children should be given the opportunity to make choices and to experience the consequences of those choices, either good or bad.

There are a lot of fatal consequences to the choices children can make e.g. running out on the road in front of a motor vehicle, jumping on a bed and falling out a window, falling out of trees and jumping in a body of water when they can't swim. When it comes to children making a choice that could result in injury or death, it is up to the parent to make sure the child has no choice in those matters.

A body of water has no feelings and the laws of physics take over. In water a non swimmer does not have a choice they will start to drown.

The point I am trying to make here is swimming lessons for your child should be a choice you make not the child. Just as you make the choice when to do the shopping or if your child can play on the street or if your child can play with matches.

Playing on the street and playing with matches; whilst they are very dangerous activities which may result in your child being injured; are activities that a child can do and not lose their life. However falling into a body of water, if your child can not hold the water with their hands and feet with enough skill to get their mouth out of the water to take a breath or to make it back to safety, will be fatal if the child is not rescued in time.

Time is the biggest issue here. A child playing on the street is at the mercy of the driver of a motor vehicle and normally the motorist will stop and remove the child from danger or for that matter when your child is playing with matches, they may experience a burn (of course they can burn the house down but normally it results in a burn). These two examples show that you can miss a child for up to 5 minutes and whilst they may be in a dangerous situation they will survive. A non swimmer in a body of water for 5 minutes will drown.

So if you are reading this article and contemplating swimming lesson for your child then make sure you make the choices. Sure some parents and children may think swimming lessons will be a daunting experience but please keep in mind that at Shapland's the instructors are very much aware of how you and your child may be feeling and will do everything in their power to make sure you and your child have a great learn to swim experience.

Chris Shapland.