



Pushing Your Child to Hard

Be patient and be aware of time frames

Teaching someone to swim is a bit like baking a cake; there is a set formula you follow. If you don't follow that formula the cake will be a disaster e.g if I put the flour and sugar into the oven and baked it, then took the ingredients out of the oven and added the milk and eggs, the cake would be terrible and I would have wasted all the time and effort because I did not follow the process.

The same applies when you teach someone to swim. There is a set process you need to follow and, just like with the cake if you deviate from the process you end up having to go back and virtually start again.

There are five basic stages a person goes through when they are learning to swim and it is important you don't move on to the next stage until the pupil has almost perfected the current stage.

There is a fine line, from the teachers' point of view, between giving a pupils turns that will challenge them and giving them turns that give them a fright and as a result the pupils' confidence, in the water and the teacher, takes a backward step.

Parents can play a big role in helping build their child's' confidence and self esteem in the water and teacher by always having something positive to say about some of the skills the child performed in the water during the lesson even if the skill was as simple as dipping their fringe in the water.

Frustration on the part of the teacher and parent does more damage to impeding the child progress than any thing else. As a teacher and parent we want to see results, and it gets very frustrating for both the teacher and parent when you see a pupil/child seemingly stuck at a skill level and may have been at that skill level for some weeks. In some cases, especially when the pupil is trying to master turning their head for a breath, the pupil may appear to be going backwards in the performance of a skill.

Everyone learn skills at different rates but one thing they all have in common is confidence. As the pupils confidence (in the teacher and the water) grows their skill level progresses. It is when a pupil is struggling with a skill, be it as simple as putting their face in the water, that their confidence levels fall and they start to dislike coming swimming.

Heated dressing rooms, private classes and parent viewing room.

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It is out of frustration both teachers and parents tend to try to push the child to perform skills they are not yet ready for and unfortunately instead of speeding up the skill acquisition period it slows it down and in most cases the pupil feel they are under a lot of pressure to perform and that in turn makes them tense. Swimming is one sport where relaxation is the key element. The more tense you are in the water the longer it take to learn to swim.

Remember the cake and let the teacher implement the process they are trained to follow. The time it takes for someone to learn to swim varies from individual to individual, so please be patient when your child appears not to be progressing, as they are normally trying to do what the instructor is asking of them, and it is only a matter of gaining confidence before they start to make progress. What may appear an easy skill to you may be very scary to the pupil so please be patient and always give your child lots of positives when the get out of the pool, even if it as simple as “I was so happy you got your hair wet”.

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