

Broome County YMCA

Parent Handbook

Guide to YMCA Swim Lessons



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History of YMCA Swim Lessons

In 2006, America's 2,594 YMCAs celebrated 100 years of group swimming instruction. Long known for their expertise in providing swim instruction and aquatics programming to all generations, YMCAs have introduced tens of millions of people nationwide to swimming since inventing group swim instruction in 1906.

The first reported YMCA "swimming bath" was built in New York City at the Brooklyn Central YMCA in 1885. The Brooklyn YMCA pool was 14 ft. wide by 45 feet and 5 feet deep. In the early years pools, in addition to being small had no filters or recirculation systems so water in the pool became dirtier until the pool was drained and cleaned. Some Ys did this on a weekly basis.

In the early 1900s, instructors suspended aspiring swimmers in the water with ropes and pulleys attached to the ceiling-until George Corsan, and instructor at the Detroit YMCA, introduced group swimming instruction in 1906. Corsan's revolutionary approach allowed large groups to practice their swimming stroke on the land and gain confidence before practicing in the water.

In 1909, the YMCA in Kansas City, Mo., introduced a new type of a pool with roll-out rims and a water recirculation system. In 1910, the YMCA invented a water filtration system, creating a healthier atmosphere for swimmers and, in turn, making swimming pools more appealing to the public.

The combination of Corsan's group-teaching techniques and new filtration systems popularized swimming and swim instruction at YMCAs. In 1910, the YMCA launched the first Teaching America to Swim campaign, which aimed to, "teach every boy and young man in North America, who does not know how, to swim" By 1932, more than a million boys and men a year enjoyed their time swimming at YMCAs. In 1956, the YMCA introduced Learn to Swim Month. By 1984, YMCAs collectively became the largest operator of swimming pools in the world. Today, millions of boys and girls, men and women of all races and faiths have learned to swim at YMCAs in the United States and around the world.

In addition to teaching millions of Americans to swim, the YMCA movement has had a huge impact on swimming instruction and aquatics programming in general. In the early 1900s, the YMCA encouraged the Red Cross to include lifesaving instruction in its disaster and wartime services programs. The Eastern Union YMCA invented the first mobile swimming pool in 1961, enabling the Y to take swim instruction and aquatics programs to those who could not visit the YMCA. In both World Wars I and II, the U.S. military used the YMCA swim instruction technique to train the Army, saving thousands of lives.

YMCAs are world pioneers in swimming instruction and aquatics programs, and the place where Americans go to find the most trusted instructors of swimming and lifeguard training. Providing introductory and advanced swimming, water fitness classes and competitive swimming programs for youth and adults, YMCAs are widely recognized as America's leading resource in aquatics.



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

Dear Swim Lesson Parent,

Welcome to YMCA Swim Lessons. Please carefully read our guidelines and procedures in this booklet to ensure a safe and successful swim lesson session.

Our swim lessons focus on five components:

- Personal Safety
- Personal Growth
- Stroke Skills
- Rescue Skills
- Water Sports and Games

The personal safety component focuses on how to protect yourself in and around the aquatic environment through boating safety and open water discussions. The personal growth component focuses on building the character values of **caring, honesty, respect** and **responsibility**, the YMCA core values. This area also concentrates on promoting positive self-esteem and goal-setting. The stroke skills component works on swimming strokes with the most up-to-date styles and skills. The YMCA has come a long way from the old style of “drill-sergeant” instruction. Along with instructor-guided command teaching, a **student-centered** approach is also used. In this method, the children are guided through a series of questions focusing on a certain skill. This method has had the best results and retention of target skills. The rescue skills component provides information about what to do in an emergency. The water sports and games component introduces children to other activities done in the water such as fitness and conditioning and diving skills. We expect each child to learn and progress at his or her own rate. Therefore, do not be discouraged if your child does not complete all the skills within his or her level during any one session. Your child needs to know that it is acceptable to take as much time as is necessary to master the skills. We understand that not every child will want to be a competitive swimmer. We want every child to continue to have positive experiences in the water and give them other aquatic alternatives for health and fun.

In closing, remember we are here to **have fun and learn how to be safe in an aquatic environment**. Please call the Aquatic Department at 770-9622 ext. 106 or 772-0560 ext. 115 with any further questions or comments. We look forward to seeing you in the pool.

Sincerely,

Heather Vanca
Aquatics Director

Patty Benda
Assistant Aquatics Director

YMCA SWIM LESSON GOALS

- focus on finding the best class for a child based on their ability.
- offer additional opportunities for members to participate in aquatics programs.
 - teach every child how to swim by grade 3
 - provide a safe aquatic environment.
- make swimming a lifelong activity for all ages.

SWIM LESSON POLICIES

Swim lessons are not considered child care, and an adult must accompany children to and from the pool or locker room area.

Children who are not yet potty trained must wear swim diapers.

All participants must be in good health and free of communicable diseases.

No refunds, unless with a physician's note. Credit may be issued for extenuating circumstances.

No make-ups or participation on an alternate day for classes missed. Participants will not be able to switch classes after the **2nd swim lesson**. There will be a \$5.00 switch fee administered if participant switches classes prior to the 2nd swim lesson.

YMCA "Lifeguard Promise"

- I will constantly scan the pool so that we can recognize swimmers in distress within 10 seconds and provide assistance within an additional 10 seconds when needed.
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- When I am on duty I will remain focused on our primary responsibility of protecting lives. Eliminating talking and doing other duties that prevent me from watching the pool.
 - I will always wear a rescue tube and carry a mask and gloves, ready for use.
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- I will always sit in an elevated chair or patrol at the edge of the pool. I will be aware of visibility issues and rotate positions accordingly.
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- I will attend regular training events to practice our skills and stay on the cutting edge of aquatic safety.
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- I am here for the YMCA participant and their safety. I will make their visit in our YMCA pool enjoyable.

SWIM LESSON PROCEDURES

Use the locker rooms when bringing your child for swim lessons, shower and use the bathroom before class begins.

At the beginning of every scheduled lesson, the participant must check-in at the table in the pool area, and should be ready and waiting on the benches at least 5 minutes before class begins. The instructors will greet the participants, provide a warm-up and then dismiss the group to their individual swim class.

On the first day of class, participants are evaluated to assess their ability and placed in the most appropriate class for them. Adjustments may be made to ensure that the swim class suits your child's ability. If you think your child is placed in the wrong swimming level, please speak to the Aquatics Director or Supervisor on duty.

For children 3 to 5 yrs. old, some may display parent anxiety. The best thing for your child is to let the aquatic staff try to work through this with your child. We strongly encourage your child to get in and try the class, however if you are uncomfortable with this approach, other arrangements may be made.

If you have any concerns or questions, please speak to the instructor after class or contact the Aquatics Director directly.

We ask that all parents of participants in the swim lesson program sit in the lobby area once your child is transitioned into their swim lesson. This is for your safety and also the safety of the participants.



YMCA SWIM LESSON LEVELS

Parent and Child: This class is for children 6-36 months. Each child must be accompanied by a parent or another trusted adult. We provide a safe and fun environment for infants and toddlers to get adjusted to the water by playing games, singing songs, and practicing basic skills. Each child will progress individually according to his or her age and level of comfort in the water.

Pike (3-5 years): This class is for beginners who have little or no previous experience in the water. Children will work on water adjustment and basic skills including blowing bubbles, the front and back float with support, jumping in with support, and paddling on the front, back, and side. Instructional flotation devices (IFDs) will be used.

Eel (3-5 years): This class is for beginners who are comfortable in the water, but who are not yet moving through the water independently. Children will continue to develop skills learned at the pike level, and will begin putting their faces in the water, floating, jumping in, and paddling without support. IFDs will continue to be used.

Ray (3-5 years): This class is for intermediates who are moving through the water independently, and who are ready to be introduced at a rudimentary level to the front and back crawl strokes, the sidestroke, the breaststroke, and the elementary backstroke. Rhythmic breathing and somersaults are also introduced. IFD's will be used to help build endurance.

Starfish (3-5 years): This class is for intermediates who have been introduced to the five basic strokes taught at the Ray level, and who are ready to continue to develop those strokes. Diving may be introduced. IFDs will be used to help build endurance.

Polliwog (6-12 years): This class is for beginners who have little or no previous experience in the water. Children will work on water adjustment and basic skills including blowing bubbles, the front and back float, jumping in, getting their faces wet, and paddling on the front, back and side. IFDs will be used.

Guppy (6-12 years): This class is for beginners who are comfortable in the water and who are ready to be introduced at a rudimentary level to the front and back crawl strokes, the sidestroke, the breaststroke, and the elementary backstroke. Rhythmic breathing, kneeling dives, and somersaults are also introduced. IFDs will be used.

Minnow (6-12 years): This class is for intermediates who have been introduced to the five basic strokes taught at the Guppy level, and who are ready to begin developing those strokes. Rotary breathing, standing dives, and the resting strokes are introduced. IFDs will sometimes be used to help build endurance.

Fish (6-12 years): This class is for intermediates who are continuing to develop the five strokes taught at the Guppy and Minnow levels, and who are ready to be introduced at a basic level to the butterfly stroke. Open turns and surface dives are introduced.

Flying Fish (6-12 years): This class is for advanced swimmers who have developed the front and back crawl strokes, the sidestroke, the breaststroke, and the elementary backstroke, and who are ready to continue to develop the butterfly stroke. Flip turns are introduced for the front and back crawl strokes.

Shark (6-12 years): This class is for advanced swimmer who have developed all six strokes learned throughout the YMCA swim lesson program. Racing starts with proper stroke pullouts and individual medley are introduced.