

# SUPERFACT SHEETS

## Drowning Prevention Program



### Why participate in a Drowning Prevention Program with your Baby, Toddler or Pre-Schooler?

#### Facts

- Did you know that over half or 50% of Queensland children starting Year 1, are not considered to have a high degree of water awareness. These children hold No skills or Very Limited Drowning Prevention Skills.
- A further 25% of Queensland children starting Year 1 only have limited Drowning Prevention Skills and very basic swimming skills.
- That's 75% of Year 1 students who are at unnecessary risk of Drowning. Less than 25% of parents actively engage in starting and continued in an ongoing drowning prevention and learn to swim program for their children, between birth and five years of age.
- To help protect young children, they must be taught water survival skills. The earlier a child is taught these skills, the safer and more confident they will be around aquatic environments. Ensuring your baby or young child receives programs with drowning prevention activities, is the best way to protect them from drowning. NOTHING prevents drowning like ADULT SUPERVISION!
- Children, in particular those under five years of age, are the most vulnerable people in our population at risk of drowning.
- As parents, we should be doing our utmost to ensure their safety. This is especially so when they are in, on or around water. Parents must address the risk of child drowning to ensure no further lives are lost.
- Research shows us that for every child drowning death in Australia, there are three to four children admitted to hospital as a result of a near drowning.
- Despite increase public campaigning, education and water awareness programs, many Australian parents are still unaware of the extent of these drowning and near drowning statistics, and are ill informed about the real dangers for young children around aquatic environments.

#### So, what can we do?

Parents and carers can reduce this risk and provide their children with valuable skills for life by following the 'Keep Watch' actions of:

- Close, constant and focused supervision at all times.
- Ensuring parents have up to date resuscitation and CPR skills. It is vital that ALL Parents, Grandparents and Carers hold a current CPR certificate and this is updated annually. CPR does save lives. Would you know what to do if your child stopped breathing?
- See upcoming dates of Superfish Parent's CPR courses on Superfish website.

- Ensure your backyard pool holds Certificate of Compliance and you follow all of the QLD Pool Safety Laws.
- Follow pool and bath safety tips  
Please download Royal Life Safety Pool and Bath Safety Sheets in 'Forms' on our website.
- Participate in water awareness and drowning prevention lessons. These lessons need to be consistent and ongoing.
- Download our Homework Hints and Helpful Advice in 'Forms' on our website.

#### Other

##### Does the owner of the Swim School have a swimming background or have they just bought a franchise?

These days, you can literally buy a franchise in anything, even a Swim School. The owner of your swim school should be very heavily involved in the sport of swimming and should have a swimming background; not just own a swim school as a business venture. In our experience, franchised swim schools have operators with little or no swimming background. How are you to give your child the best swimming program when the operators do not really know what they are teaching or why they are teaching it?

##### Communications and Information

Your swim centre should keep you thoroughly informed at all times. The centre should provide you with program details and regular information updates with varied media. To include newsletters, printed information brochures and booklets, website and facebook, emails and sms. The centre should also regularly inform you of your child's progress with assessment weeks, open communication with your instructor and recognition reports of swimming development with detailed certificates.

##### What will be taught?

- Breath control (take a breath before submerging in the water).
- Hold their breath (while submerging in water).
- Independent Floating.
- Rolling onto their backs from a submerged position.
- How to reach up, grab and turn, for the pools edge.
- How to stay horizontal in the water by sculling arms (paddling arms or swapping arms) and kicking legs.
- How to combine swimming and floating if getting to the side is not a possibility.
- Regular lessons in full clothing, nappy and shoes.

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## Drowning Prevention Program vs Conventional Learn to Swim Classes; what's the difference?

### One Word. Survival!

**Drowning Prevention Lessons should not be 'fun' lessons that drag on week after week, for years, wasting parents money and potentially dangerous to your child.**

Conventional Learn to Swim Lessons teach limited independent prevention activities, because they are usually mixed with too many songs and games, without enough 'work' on Independent Drowning Prevention Skills.

Drowning Prevention needs to be established in young children first, then, when these skills are mastered, further Learn to Swim skills can be taught once a high degree of Prevention Skills are mastered.

As well as teaching a healthy respect of aquatic environments, we need skills taught that will assist young children SURVIVE if they found themselves in a potentially deadly aquatic environment.

**There is a reason why we do EVERY activity in our lessons.** Always, as a parent, know HOW to do activities, WHY your child is doing it, and WHAT they are working towards. **You need your baby or toddler to complete Drowning Prevention Lessons as a priority.**

### Ask Questions!

- Ask the swim school WHY they do particular activities. They need to have detailed, constructive reasons why they teach ALL aspects of the program. You need to know WHY your child is doing the activity, WHAT it is working towards and HOW do they need to achieve the skill. See our FAQ's on the Superfish website or talk to your centre manager or instructor.

### Multiple lessons per week

- CONSISTENCY over a period of time is key! We understand that everyone has busy lives, but this needs to be a priority for Under 5's.
- A minimum of 2 lessons per week (optimum 3 lessons) over a period of time, with NO BREAKS is necessary to see results with babies and young children, as early as possible. 6 months old is a perfect age to commence these classes.
- Swimming lessons through the Winter months VITAL for your Drowning Prevention Program.

### What should we look for in lessons?

#### NO 'AIDS' in LESSONS

- Make sure the centre does not teach using 'aids' like floaties, back bubbles, goggles or flippers (during basic drowning prevention lessons). ALL of these tools are dangerous for children in the early stages of swimming development as these aids give a false sense of security, giving a 'false' confidence in dangerous aquatic situations.

#### An emphasis on independent floating and rolling drills.

- Can your baby or young child FLOAT INDEPENDENTLY for 30secs or more in rough water? NO Parents holding!!!!
- Can they paddle independently and roll onto their backs to float?

#### An emphasis in lessons on SWIM, ROLL, FLOAT, ROLL, SWIM INDEPENDENTLY

- Can your baby or young child paddle with forward momentum, roll on their back, float for a period of time on their back, then roll back to a swimming position paddling and kicking with forward momentum.

#### Other Drowning Prevention Skills

- Do lessons start EVERY class on edge of pool, with a safety entry? Classes should develop good skills around the aquatic environment.
- Is it a 'REFLEX' with your baby or young child to fall in to a pool head first, backwards, lying down, sideways to catch the wall?

#### Does the centre hold regular CLOTHED SWIMMING WEEKS with students?

- Young children need to experience what it feels like in the water fully clothed. They need to complete Drowning Prevention Drills, regularly, with clothes and shoes on.

#### Qualified Instructors

- As well as the basic requirements of an Austswim or Swim Australia Certificate, QLD Blue Card and CPR, the best swim centres should hold regular in-house training programs for their instructors. These training programs are vital in individual instructor standards, developing teaching skills and maintaining these standards with ALL instructors in their organization.

Please see our 'Team Profile' page on the Superfish website or ask your centre manager for details.

#### Professional, Structured Programs

- Programs must be teaching drowning prevention and aquatic skills that advance to more advanced skills in each level in the program. The centre must conduct regular swimming assessments for children in the program. The classes should not be 'mixed' with children at different swimming standards. Classes should have only children of a similar age, ability and standard, consistent with their assessment.

#### Professional Facilities

- Make sure the swim centre is inviting to your child. Clean, warm water is imperative. If the facility is not clean, this generally is a good indication of the whole centre standards.

Please see Program Information in 'Programs' on the Superfish website or collect an Information Brochure from Superfish reception.

#### Affiliation with Professional Organizations

- Is the centre affiliated with Swim Australia, Austswim, Royal Life Saving?

