

# JUST KEEP SWIMMING

## Infant and Toddler Bathtub time

### Verbal Cues

In the bathtub, you can practice certain verbal cues with your child also used in their swim lessons, such as “kick, kick, kick” and “splashing, splashing”. Learning how to kick is often the first mechanical swim technique your baby will learn, as well as the most important part of propelling through the water. Helping your child to become familiar with these cues will help further their learning in the pool setting.

### Back Float

An important part of learning to swim involves your child being comfortable on their back with water surrounding them. You can help them get used to this sensation by starting with just a small amount of water in the bathtub and laying your child on his/her back. As your child gets more comfortable, raise the level of the bathtub water high enough for your child to lay on their back with the water covering their body and ears, and their face above the water line. This skill should be practiced slowly and progressively, and often takes time and patience before your child will feel comfortable. Take your time and don't be discouraged if your child isn't comfortable with this at first!

### Submerging

Encourage your child to put their face in the water by asking them to “kiss the water!” and providing support when they do so. If your child is already comfortable with their face under water, they can practice this in the bathtub as well. Practice bringing a pair of swim goggles to bath time and having your child look for objects on the bottom of the tub while laying on their belly.

**The Wave at Emerald Glen Park**

4201 Central Parkway, Dublin, CA 94568

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## Motor Skills

Allowing your child to interact with toys in the bathtub will not only help them practice their motor skills in the water, but will promote their excitement and enjoyment which are extremely important in order to learn to swim.

## Water Overhead

Make sure you let your child know that you are going to pour water by saying “1,2,3...” or “OK, here we go!” and pour water over your child’s head so that it runs over their face. This will help your child get used to the feeling of being underwater and practice breath

## Excitement!

Make sure to respond with excitement and praise!

Your child’s enjoyment of the water is the most important skill to learn as they get ready for or continue in toddler swim lessons. Including games, songs, toys, and your own praise and happiness in bath time with your child will help them learn to love the water and be excited about swim lessons.

\*\*\*No matter what, make sure to never leave your child alone in the bathtub, even if just for a minute, and ALWAYS check the temperature of the bathtub water before allowing your child to get in.

## Blow Bubbles in the Bathtub

Bath time is the perfect opportunity to practice swimming skills since your child feels comfortable in the shallow water. Try having them put their face in the water to blow bubbles. Once they are comfortable with getting their face wet, encourage them to submerge their entire head. Learning to blow bubbles in the water is one of the vital skills that your child needs to progress through to the next swimming level.

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## Items for Older Children

### **Move Onto Rotational Breathing:**

Once your child masters holding their breath under water, they will begin to work with their professional Wave swim instructor to teach rotational breathing. At home, you can continue to practice this skill with your child in the bathtub. Simply have your child put their head in the water and hold their breath until you tap their head. This signals when they should bring their head out to catch a breath before going back under. Practice this skill often until your child becomes more confident with holding their breath underwater.

### **Perform Arm Rotations in the Air:**

Many of the basic swimming strokes can be practiced outside of the water. During your child's swim classes, observe the way that the instructor shows your child how to move their arms during each stroke. Then, have your child practice these arm motions while they are sitting or standing at home. Make sure to encourage your child to fully complete each arm rotation as if they were actually swimming. This helps to improve their coordination on more difficult swim strokes.

### **Practice Kicking on the Floor:**

Young children often struggle with keeping their legs straight during flutter kicks. Your child can practice this skill while laying on the floor. Spend time helping them to practice making small, swift movements with their legs during the kicking sessions. If they are small enough, you can also take these lessons into the bathtub so that your child learns how to move through the resistance created by the water.

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## Watch Swimming Videos:

Observation is an essential part of learning how to improve your child's swimming skills. During your free time, watch videos of professional swimmers with your child. Make sure to use the appropriate names for each stroke, and discuss what you see the swimmers doing well together. Over time, you will notice that your child begins to pick up the vocabulary used in competitive swimming, which increases their ability to understand what their swimming coach tells them to do during their lessons.

Learning to swim takes time, but you can increase the speed at which your child acquires new skills by supporting their learning at home to practice outside of their swimming classes in The Wave. By knowing how to practice water skills outside of the pool, your child will begin to emerge as an accomplished swimmer who is comfortable in the water.

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