



Fear of Swimming and the Crying Child

Your first time swimmer is entering a new environment and meeting new people. As a result they can become very uncomfortable, so it is not unusual for them to cry. Crying is sometimes the only way for your child to communicate how they feel. Your student may also cry due to fear of water, lack of experience or separation from you the parent. At times it is a combination of all of the above. It is sometimes hard to know the best way to handle these situations. Many parents want to come to the rescue, coddle or feel embarrassment. Some just want to take the child and leave. . . .

AQUA~FIT realizes this can be quite challenging on the parent. It is very difficult to see your child cry and be unable to comfort them. **AQUA~FIT** works with your child in a loving way, finding what works and what doesn't. Together a plan will be developed for your swimmer to build confidence, comfort and learn that water is fun. We ask parents to stick with it. Time is ultimate factor. **AQUA~FIT** WILL return a more confident and happy swimmer.

9 Tips to Help the Crying Child (and parents too!)

- ✈ **Prepare your child**, talk about the fun and importance of learning to swim.
- ✈ **Visit AQUA~FIT before the first class**. Point out the fun other swimmers are having.
- ✈ **Make Bath Time, Swim Time:** Splash, wipe your child's face with the hand. Say, **"Wipe and Blow, Pinch Your Nose and Water Goes Away."**
- ✈ **Be on time for your child's classes**. Arriving on time allows your student to prepare mentally. Each class starts with **Pow Wow Time (Rules before the Pool)**. Allow your child to walk in & out of the building to help establish confidence and an "I can do it" attitude.
- ✈ **It is best to be out of immediate sight of your child**. Use the viewing room to observe your child's progression. Happy Faces and thumbs up! This lets your child know where you showing support & will be there after class. This helps keep anxiety and discomfort in balance.
- ✈ **Praise, Praise, Praise your child immediately after class, no matter what!!**
- ✈ **Rewards that are not food related** are great at the end of each week's session. Rings, pool toys, kick boards, new suits, special towels & special dates to your child's favorite places are great tools. Stickers are given out at the front desk-make a progress chart.
- ✈ **Practice, Practice, Practice**, especially on the weekends between sessions. Mondays can be quite challenging if your swimmer has not had a chance to practice. Use **AQUA FIT** during Open Swim Times (available at the front desk) as your practice pool. No charge while swimmers are enrolled in the swim program.
- ✈ **Don't become dependent** on swim goggles, floaties, swim trainers, etc. What if your child falls into the water and doesn't have them? **All children need to learn to swim assistant free.**

So when will the crying and apprehensive behaviors stop? Every child is different. On the average, most change occurs between the third and fourth lesson. By the end of the second week, usually a calmer, less crying and happier child emerges. Again all this depends how you work with your child, provide positive reinforcement and your child's pool practice time. Sometimes a private lesson helps to speed this process. Please obtain assistance at the front desk. OR, feel free to discuss with Miss Mimi or Assistant on duty, the best method for you and your child to get the most out of the **AQUA~FIT** Swim Experience.

