



Water Safety Curriculum

The safety of people with autism is of paramount concern to family members and caregivers. Drowning is a leading cause of death for children and adults with autism; however, many children with autism can be taught to swim. Additionally, familiarity with the pool setting and basic swimming skills can help save lives ***even if a person does not entirely learn to swim!***

This is why we aren't covering more advanced techniques. Ideally, learning those will come with exposure to water and the joy of pools during the summer, more traditional lessons and swim teams.)

This swim program introduces children with a disability to water and teaches them how to swim in deep water as well as promotes crucial, life-savings skills. The program is designed especially for lifeguards and pool managers to teach children on the Autism Spectrum.

Or send an information package to someone you know.

Acknowledgements

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Lesley Bates received a Master's in Special Education from George Mason University and a post-graduate certificate in Applied Behavioral Analysis from George Mason University. She has been an educator of children with autism for the past 10 years as a classroom teacher in Fairfax County Public Schools. In addition, she also has experience as ABA home therapist, developing home curriculum for ABA therapists and swim instructors for both children with autism and children without autism. She has taught a variety of different types of learners from ages 3-13, and in different environments such as classrooms, home settings and community settings specializing in language development, social skills, academic skills, and independent living skills.

Autism Speaks Family Community Grants

The authors of this publication hereby acknowledge Autism Speaks Family Community Grants as the funding agency for the project leading to this publication. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily express or reflect the views of Autism Speaks or any other funding agency.

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Meredyth Biggs, is passionate about using the basic behavioral principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) to help individuals make socially significant changes in their behavior and lead more independent, fulfilling lives. She currently runs a small practice, Core Behavioral Consulting, Inc, in Arlington, Virginia. Outside of her practice, she serves on the Advisory Council for the Parents Of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia. Her affiliations include the Virginia Association for Behavior Analysts and the Association for Professional Behavior Analysts. She holds a Virginia State license from the Department of Education as a Special Education Teacher (M. Ed.). The Board of Medicine has also licensed her as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (L-BCBA).

Kevin A. McGrail, Project Manager

Kevin A. McGrail has served as a director, officer & webmaster of POAC-NoVA for many years and this project was very personal to him. His son, Dillon, has autism and learned to swim from Lesley Bates. He hopes this curriculum is useful and helps more parents put their minds at ease concerning their children and water safety.

Additional Thanks

In addition to the families who helped test this curriculum, volunteering their kids for photos and videos, we also wish to thank Remington Press, James Bennett Design, and Dapplepatch Designs by rjk for their assistance in making this project a reality.



About

The program uses a **60 points to success** swim program designed for pools ranging from 2 to 8 feet deep. Each point has (1) a goal, (2) instructor's formation, (3) teaching strategies, and (4) items the instructor should watch out for when teaching.

The points are grouped by skill level as the swimmers progress and there is a summary of each level. Swimmers may start at any point that is appropriate within their skill level and it is not necessary that the 60 swim points are taught in order. But we strongly advise that the instructor individualize or group swimmers by abilities.

- A parent or guardian **MUST** be able to swim and must be in the pool with his or her child.
- Children may not use flotation devices during the lessons.

- Children may stay and enjoy the pool after the lesson to practice swimming.
- The last lesson should be with clothes and shoes on.
- Reinforce adequate attention and reflection before the pool section including: reinforcers, locker rooms, and loud noises (since indoor pools can be very loud), water temperature, behavior problems. Do not create a negative association with the pool.
- Notes for lifeguards: The instructors are well-meaning and support the overall goal for children to benefit from the class. It is our hope that parents will take advantage of the information learned and pool access to improve their child's swimming ability!

Exercises

Level 1

Level 1 is designed for swimmers who have a fear of water or have a history of inappropriate behaviors in water. It is important to create a positive relationship between the swimmer and water. The swimmer should want to go in the water. In order to create and nurture this positive relationship, the swimmer needs to have many positive experiences with water. It is recommended that parents pair water with specific motivating items that the child enjoys. It is okay if the swimmer is a little reluctant when entering the water, however the swimmer should not be engaging in a high rate of inappropriate behaviors. Pairing may need to occur at each new water environment encountered by the swimmer.

1. Pairing

Goal: The swimmer should be able to enter a neighborhood pool at various water depths with adult guidance ***and only with adult guidance***. Pairing with the water should be done by the parents or caregiver of the child. The adult can hold the swimmer or hold hands with the swimmer, or the swimmer can walk into the pool by themselves. This will minimize the inappropriate behavior that the swimmer may display during the lesson. The amount of time spent on pairing will depend on the swimmer's level of learning, as well as the swimmer's comfort level in the water. If there is a high rate of inappropriate behaviors, the adult should repeat attempts at later times.

Formation: The swimmer's level of comfort will determine the starting location for pairing. Locations may include the following: bathtub, baby pool, shallow pool, wading pool, water fixtures (e.g. splash parks, sprinklers, water toys) or neighborhood pools.

Strategies: Use the swimmer's motivation when pairing with water. Bring highly preferred toys or items with the swimmer when he or she is exposed to the water. For example, if the swimmer enjoys cars, bring along cars and allow the swimmer to play with them in the baby pool. Use highly preferred food items. Use the phrase "First _____ Then_____."

For example, you might tell your child, "First you run through the sprinkler, and then you get a chip." Use timers or a visual/written schedule with your swimmer. For example, you might say â We are going to swim in the big pool until the timer goes off.â You should gradually increase the amount of time the swimmer is in the big pool.

What to Watch Out For: Some swimmers with autism may exhibit problem behaviors when transitioning from the baby pool to the big pool at various depths. It is important to use the strategies listed above. However, if a swimmer is not fearful of water yet non-compliant when following directions, it might be best to work on following directions first before starting to learn how to swim. Remember that each swimmer is different, and the necessary amount of time spent pairing will depend on the swimmer's comfort level in the pool.

Level 2

Level 2 is designed for the swimmer to become acquainted with water in a pool while feeling safe in the instructorâ s arm. Depending on the swimmerâ s comfort level, an instructor may skip straight to Level 3.

2. Bear Hug

Goal: The swimmer hugs the instructor while standing in the pool.

Formation: The swimmerâ s arms and legs are wrapped around the instructor. The instructor is not walking around, but is simply holding the swimmer.

Strategies: Use the count strategy. The instructor may begin by sitting on the stairs.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer may display inappropriate behaviors, especially if he or she is fearful. Be sure to use the appropriate strategies from the Level 1 Pairing swim point.

3. Bear Hug - Walking

Goal: The swimmer hugs the instructor as the instructor walks around the pool at various depths.

Formation: The swimmer's arms and legs are wrapped around the instructor. The instructor is walking around the pool at various depths.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy as well as the Go and Touch Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer may display inappropriate behaviors especially if he or she is fearful. Be sure to use strategies from the Level 1 Paring swim point. It is important that the instructor walk in a variety of depths.

Level 3

Level 3 is designed for the swimmer to feel his or her body in the pool at various depths while holding onto the instructor. Level 3 and Level 4 may be taught simultaneously.

4. Armpit Hold

Goal: The instructor holds the swimmer by the armpits, with the swimmer first facing the instructor and then facing away from the instructor.

Formation: The instructor is supporting the swimmer by placing his or her hands under the swimmer's armpits.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: A fearful swimmer may grab your bathing suit or neck in an attempt to have the instructor hug them. Be sure to use appropriate strategies from the Level 1 pairing swim point.

5. Armpit Hold - Walking

Goal: The instructor holds the swimmer by his or her armpits, first facing towards instructor and then away from the instructor. The instructor walks around the pool at various depths.

Formation: The instructor is holding the swimmer's armpits. The swimmer's body should be vertical.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy and Go as well as the Touch Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: A fearful swimmer may grab your neck or bathing suit in an attempt to have you hug them. Be sure to use strategies from the Level 1 Pairing swimming point.

6. Armpit Hold - Swaying

Goal: The instructor holds the swimmer by his or her armpits while swaying the swimmer's body from side to side. The swaying motion should be practiced with the swimmer first facing towards the instructor and then away from the instructor. The instructor walks around the pool at various depths.

Formation: The instructor is holding the swimmer's armpits. The swimmer's body should be vertical. The instructor is moving the swimmer from left to right or right to left.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: A fearful swimmer may grab your neck or bathing suit in an attempt for you to hug them. Be sure to use strategies from the Level 1 Pairing swimming point.

Level 4

Level 4 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to position his or her body in the pool, as well as how to kick his or her legs. Practicing the variety of forearm holds is very important for every swimmer, because it allows the instructor to teach the swimmer to keep his or her body horizontal.

7. Forearm Hold

Goal: The swimmer holds the forearm of the instructor. The swimmer's body should be in a horizontal position without touching the bottom of the pool.

Formation: The instructor stretches his or her forearm out, and the swimmer grabs the forearm with two hands.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The position of the swimmer needs to be horizontal, without his or her feet touching the bottom of the pool.

8. Forearm Hold - Walking

Goal: The swimmer holds the forearm of the instructor. The swimmer's body is in a horizontal position without touching the bottom of the pool. The instructor is walking in the pool in a variety of water depths.

Formation: The swimmer is holding onto the instructor's forearm with two hands. The instructor is walking around the pool at various depths.

Strategies: Use the Count strategy as well as the Go and Touch strategy.

What to Watch Out For: If the swimmer's body is vertical, then the instructor should use his or her other hand and guide the swimmer's hips to a horizontal position.

9. Forearm Hold - Swaying

Goal: The swimmer holds onto the forearm of the instructor while the instructor uses that forearm to sway the swimmer back and forth on top of the water. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The swimmer is holding onto the instructor's forearm while the instructor uses his or her other arm to keep the swimmer horizontal.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy, as well as the Go and Touch Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to stay as horizontal as possible and practice at various depths.

10. Forearm Hold Kicking - Physical Prompts

Goal: The swimmer holds onto the forearm of the instructor while the instructor uses his or her free hand to physically move the swimmer's legs to a kicking motion.

Formation: The swimmer is holding the instructor's forearm. The instructor uses his or her other hand to physically move the swimmer's legs.

Strategies: Count the number of kicks, as well as use verbal prompts. For example, you might say, "Stretch out like Superman!" to keep the swimmer horizontal or "Try and get me wet!" to cue strong kicks.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to stay as horizontal as possible while kicking.

Level 5

Level 5 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to keep his or her body in a horizontal position while kicking his or her legs, using the pool wall for support instead of the instructor.

11. Wall Hold - Stomach Support

Goal: The swimmer holds the wall while the instructor's hands are under the swimmer's stomach. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The swimmer is holding the wall in a horizontal position at various depths. The instructor uses two hands with open palms on the swimmer's stomach.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy, as well as verbal prompts, such as, "Stretch out like Superman!"

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to stay as horizontal as possible.

12. Wall Hold - Stomach Support - Kicks

Goal: The swimmer holds the wall and kicks his or her legs under the water while the instructor's hands are under the swimmer's stomach.

Formation: The swimmer is holding the wall while the instructor uses two hands with open palms on the swimmer's stomach. The instructor tells the swimmer to kick his or her legs.

Strategies: Use model prompting, as well as count the number of kicks. Additionally, use verbal prompts, such as, "Stretch out like Superman and kick your legs!"

What to Watch Out For: Slowly increase the number of kicks expected from the swimmer.

13. Wall Hold - Stomach Support - Superman

Goal: The swimmer holds the wall in a horizontal position while the instructorâ€™s hands are under the swimmerâ€™s stomach.

Formation: The swimmer is holding the wall in a horizontal position. The instructor uses two hands with open palms on the swimmerâ€™s stomach.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy, as well as verbal prompts, such as, "Stretch out like Superman!"

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to stay as horizontal as possible. Gradually increase the number of seconds expected for the swimmer to hold themselves.

14. Wall Hold - Stomach Support - Superman with Kicks

Goal: The swimmer holds the wall in a horizontal position while the instructorâ€™s hands are under the swimmerâ€™s stomach. The swimmer kicks his or her legs without support several times.

Formation: The swimmer is holding the wall in a horizontal position. The instructor uses two hands with open palms on the swimmerâ€™s stomach. The instructor tells the swimmer to kick his or her legs.

Strategies: Use model prompting, the Count Strategy, and verbal prompts such as, "Stretch out like Superman and kick your legs!"

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer's legs need to be straight while kicking. Be sure that the swimmer is not bending his or her knees.

15. Wall Hold - No Stomach Support

Goal: The swimmer holds the wall beside the instructor at various depths.

Formation: The swimmer is holding the wall, and his or her legs can be in a vertical position.

Strategies: Use model prompting, as well as the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to be comfortable at various depths.

16. Wall Hold - No Stomach Support - Kicks

Goal: The swimmer holds the wall and kicks his or her legs under the water beside the instructor. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The swimmer is holding the wall, and his or her legs can be in a vertical position.

Strategies: Use model prompting, as well as the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to be comfortable at various depths and needs to kick his or her legs under the water.

17. Wall Hold - No Stomach Support - Superman

Goal: The swimmer holds the wall in a horizontal position. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The instructor stands next to the swimmer as the swimmer maintains a horizontal position.

Strategies: Use model prompting, as well as the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to stay as horizontal as possible.

18. Wall Hold - No Stomach Support - Superman with Kicks

Goal: The swimmer holds the wall in a horizontal position and kicks with their legs coming out of the water. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The instructor is standing beside the swimmer as the swimmer is kicking their legs above the water while maintaining a horizontal position.

Strategies: Use model prompting, as well as the Count Strategy. If the swimmer needs stomach support, provide necessary support and then "fade it out" or gradually reduce the amount of support given.

What to Watch out For: The swimmer needs to maintain a horizontal position with straight legs while he or she kicks.

Level 6

Level 6 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to back float and remain comfortable on his or her back while in a pool. Some swimmers learn to swim on their stomachs first before they are able to swim on their backs. Therefore, this level may be taught with more advanced levels.

19. Back Float Support

Goal: The swimmer floats on his or her back while the instructor supports the back of his or her head and lower back. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The swimmer is laying on either the instructor's open palms or on the instructor's forearms, depending on the size of the swimmer. One palm or forearm is placed behind the swimmer's head and the other palm or forearm is placed on the swimmer's lower back.

Strategies: Use model prompting, as well as the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to maintain a horizontal position while lying on his or her back.

20. T-Back Float Support - Arms Out Like a T

Goal: The swimmer floats on his or her back with his or her arms extended in the form of a T. The instructor supports the back of his or her head and lower back. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The swimmer is laying on either the instructor's open palms or on the instructor's forearms, depending on the size of the swimmer. The swimmer's arms should be out like the Letter T. One palm or forearm is placed behind the swimmer's head and the other palm or forearm is placed on the swimmer's lower back.

Strategies: Use model prompting, the Count Strategy, and verbal prompts, such as, "Look at the sky," "Make a big stomach," and "Take a deep breath."

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to maintain a horizontal position on top of the water. The swimmer needs to be comfortable at various depths.

21. T-Back Float Faded Support

Goal: The swimmer floats on his or her back with his or her arms extended in the form of a T. The instructor supports the back of his or her head and lower back, having "faded support". The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: While the swimmer is lying on his or her back, the instructor starts with an open palm on the back of his or her head and lower back. This is gradually reduced to using two hands on the middle of the back, then one hand on the middle of the back, and finally just fingertips on the back.

Strategies: Use model prompting, the Count Strategy, and verbal prompts, such as, "Look at the sky" and "Make a big stomach and arms out like the Letter T."

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to remain horizontal on top of the water. The instructor may have to fade prompts and repeat over the course of several sessions. The swimmer needs to be comfortable at various depths.

22. T-Back Float No Support

Goal: The swimmer floats on his or her back with his or her arms out like a T. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The instructor is beside the swimmer using verbal prompts.

Strategies: Use model prompting, the Count Strategy, and verbal prompts, such as, "Look at the sky" and "Make a big stomach and arms out like the Letter T."

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to remain horizontal on top of the water. The swimmer needs to be comfortable at various depths.

Level 7

Level 7 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to move his or her body when he or she is stomach down in the pool. There are multiple holds described in Level 7; however, the instructors should practice holds that work best for the swimmer.

23. Stomach Hold

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her stomach and he or she is stomach-side down in the water. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The instructor has two hands on the swimmer's stomach while the swimmer is lying stomach-side down. The swimmer's head is above the water.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to be comfortable with the hold at various depths.

24. Stomach Hold - Walking

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her stomach and is stomach-side down in the water while the instructor is walking. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The instructor has two hands on the swimmer's stomach as the instructor is walking. The swimmer is lying stomach-side down with his or her head above the water.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to be comfortable with the hold at various depths.

25. Hip Hold - Superman

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her hips and is stretched out like superman. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The instructor has two hands on the swimmer's stomach while the swimmer is lying stomach-side down. The swimmer's head is above the water.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to be comfortable with the hold at various depths.

26. Hip Hold - Walking

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her hips and is stretched out like superman as the instructor is walking around the pool. The swimmer should practice at various depths.

Formation: The instructor has two hands on the swimmer's hips, while the swimmer is lying stomach-side down. The swimmer's head is above the water.

Strategies: Use the Go and Touch Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to be comfortable with the hold while the instructor is walking at various depths.

27. Hip Hold - Physical Prompt to Move Hands Back and Forth or Up and Down

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her hips and is stretched out like Superman while moving his or her hands with physical prompts from the instructor. The instructor is walking around the pool, but this should be done in a depth where the swimmer can stand.

Formation: The instructor has two hands on the swimmer's hips and is behind the swimmer. The swimmer is stretched out like Superman. The instructor holds the swimmer's hips with one hand and use his or her other hand to prompt the swimmer's arms to move. The swimmer's head is above the water.

Strategies: Use the Go and Touch Strategy and a verbal prompt as you are physically prompting the swimmer's hands. Pick a prompt that the swimmer easily understands, such as, "Move your arms up and down" or "Move your arms back and forth."

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to be comfortable with the hold. Be sure the swimmer is not simply standing but rather in a horizontal position.

28. Hip Hold - Move Hands

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her hips and is stretched out like Superman and while moving his or her hands without physical prompts from the instructor. The instructor is walking around the pool. This should be done in different depths at which the swimmer can stand and cannot stand.

Formation: The instructor has two hands on the swimmer's hips and is behind the swimmer. The swimmer is stretched out like Superman. The swimmer's head is above water.

Strategies: Use the Go and Touch Strategy and a verbal prompt as you are physically prompting the swimmer's hands. Pick a prompt that the swimmer easily understands, such as, "Move your arms up and down" or "Move your arms back and forth."

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to be comfortable with the hold and with moving his or her arms by themselves. Be sure the swimmer is not just standing, but rather in a horizontal position.

29. Hip Hold - Fade Support - Move Hands

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her hips and gradually released. The swimmer is moving his or her hands independently. This should be achieved in a depth at which the swimmer cannot stand.

Formation: The instructor starts with two hands on the swimmer's hips, then gradually uses fingertips on the hips, and finally no hands on the hips. As the swimmer is able to swim without the hip hold, the instructor needs to be beside the swimmer. Give support by physically prompting if the swimmer's body becomes more vertical than horizontal.

Strategies: Use the Count Strategy or the Go and Touch Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to remain horizontal and move his or her hands independently.

30. Hip Hold - Move Hands and Kick Feet

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her hips and is moving his or her hands and feet independently. This should be done in a depth where the swimmer can't stand.

Formation: The instructor is beside the swimmer and is verbally prompting the swimmer to kick his or her feet. The instructor is also giving support by physically prompting the swimmer if the position of his or her body becomes more vertical than horizontal.

Strategies: Model the exercise, and use the Count Strategy or Go and Touch Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: maintain a horizontal position and move his or her hands independently.

31. Hip Hold (Faded Support) - Move Hands and Kick Feet

Goal: The swimmer is held by his or her hips and the instructor is gradually releasing the hold on his or her hips. The swimmer is moving his or her hands independently. The instructor is verbally prompting the swimmer to kick his or her feet. This should be achieved in a depth at which the swimmer cannot stand.

Formation: The instructor is beside to the swimmer and verbally prompting the swimmer to kick his or her feet. The instructor is also giving support by physically prompting the swimmer if the position of his or her body becomes more vertical than horizontal.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy or Go and Touch Strategy. Additionally, use verbal prompts to keep the swimmer kicking and moving his or her hands.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to maintain a horizontal position while moving his or her hands and kicking his or her feet independently.

Level 8

Level 8 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to go under the water. It is important for the instructors to use the strategies described in point 32 if the swimmer is fearful. The swimmer needs to be willing to put his or her face and then head under the water. The necessary amount of time spent on this lesson will depend on the swimmer's comfort level.

32. Face in the Water - Shallow Water

Goal: The swimmer puts his or her face in the water.

Formation: The instructor is facing the swimmer in a depth at which the swimmer can stand.

Strategies: Model the motion and use the Count Strategy. Initially, the swimmer should simply put his or her face in the water. If the swimmer is hesitant, first practice "kissing the water," followed by putting one's "nose in the water," "eyes in the water," and finally "face in the water."

What to Watch Out For: Do not dunk a fearful swimmer.

33. Head in the Water - Shallow Water

Goal: The swimmer puts his or her head in the water.

Formation: The instructor is facing the swimmer in a depth at which the swimmer can stand.

Strategies: Model the motion and use the Count Strategy. Initially, the swimmer should simply put his or her face in the water. If the swimmer is hesitant, first practice "kissing the water," followed by putting one's "nose in the water," "eyes in the water," and finally "face in the water."

What to Watch Out For: Do not dunk a fearful swimmer. The swimmer's entire head needs to be submerged in the water.

34. Face in the Water - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer places his or her face in the water in a depth at which he or she cannot stand.

Formation: The instructor is facing the swimmer using an armpit hold and in a depth at which the swimmer cannot stand.

Strategies: Model the motion and use the Count Strategy. Initially the swimmer should simply put his or her face in the water. If the swimmer is hesitant, first practice "kissing the water," followed by putting one's "nose in the water," "eyes in the water," and finally "face in the water."

What to Watch Out For: Do not dunk a fearful swimmer. Make sure the swimmer is not standing on his or her tiptoes.

35. Head in the Water - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer puts his or her head in the water in a depth at which he or she cannot stand.

Formation: The instructor is facing the swimmer using an armpit hold in a depth at which the swimmer cannot stand.

Strategies: Model the motion and use the Count Strategy by counting the number of seconds the swimmer's face is in the water. Initially, the swimmer should simply put his or her face in the water. If the swimmer is hesitant, first practice "kissing the water," followed by putting one's "nose in the water," "eyes in the water," and finally "face in the water."

What to Watch Out For: Do not dunk a fearful swimmer. Be sure the swimmer is not standing on his or her tiptoes.

Level 9

Level 9 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to propel his or her body in the water. Level 9 can be combined with Level 11 and Level 12 depending on the swimmer's skills.

36. Rocket Push (Armpit Hold with Wall) - Shallow Water

Goal: The swimmer pushes off the wall in a depth at which he or she can stand, while the instructor is using an armpit hold.

Formation: The swimmer's knees are bent and the instructor has a hand under each one of the swimmer's armpits. The instructor then pushes the swimmer off the wall.

Strategies: Use verbal prompts such as, "We are going to pretend you are a rocket."

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer is in deep enough water where his or her knees do not hit the bottom.

37. Rocket Push (Armpit Hold with Wall) - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer pushes off the wall in a depth at which he or she cannot stand, while the instructor is using an armpit hold.

Formation: The swimmer's knees are bent and the instructor has a hand under each one of the swimmer's armpits. The instructor then pushes the swimmer off the wall.

Strategies: Use the verbal prompt, "We are going to pretend you are a rocket." The instructor should try to feel the momentum of the swimmer and slightly let go of the swimmer when he or she pushes off the wall.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer is in deep enough water where his or her knees do not hit the bottom.

Level 10

Level 10 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to jump into the pool with the instructor's support. Some swimmers are able to skip Level 10.

38. Sitting Jump in Pool (Adult Catch)

Goal: The swimmer sits on the edge of the pool and then slides into the pool while the instructor catches the swimmer.

Formation: The instructor is in the water with his or her arms out and the swimmer falls off the edge into the instructor's arms.

Strategies: For fearful swimmers, the instructor can start in shallow water where the swimmer can stand and then move to deeper water where the swimmer cannot stand. The instructor can use an armpit hold with the swimmer as he or she slide into the pool.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure to start with an appropriate level of prompting at which the swimmer can be successful.

39. Kneeling Jump in Pool (Adult Catch)

Goal: The swimmer kneels on the edge of the pool and then jumps into the pool while the instructor catches the swimmer.

Formation: The instructor is in the water with his or her arms out and the swimmer jumps into the instructor's arms.

Strategies: For fearful swimmers, the instructor can start in shallow water where the swimmer can stand and then move to deeper water where the swimmer cannot stand. The instructor can use an armpit hold with the swimmer as the swimmer jumps into the pool. Additionally, model the exercise with the swimmer.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure to start with an appropriate level of prompting at which the swimmer can be successful.

40. Standing Jump in Pool (Adult Catch)

Goal: The swimmer stands on the edge of the pool and then jumps into the pool while the instructor catches the swimmer.

Formation: The instructor is in the water with his or her arms out and the swimmer jumps into the instructor's arms.

Strategies: For fearful swimmers, the instructor can start in shallow water where the swimmer can stand and then move to deeper water where the swimmer cannot stand. The instructor can hold the swimmer's hands as the swimmer jumps into the pool.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure to start with an appropriate level of prompting at which the swimmer can be successful.

Level 11

Level 11 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to move his or her arms and breathe as he or she swims underwater.

41. Arm Circles - Shallow Water

Goal: The swimmer stands in the water and moves his or her arms in a circular motion, with both arms moving simultaneously.

Formation: The instructor is standing in front of the swimmer and modeling the motion. However, if the swimmer needs a physical prompt, the instructor can stand at the swimmer's hips and place his or her hands over the swimmer's hands to complete the circular motion.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy to count the number of arm circles completed by the swimmer.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to make complete circles with both arms.

42. Arm Circles with Breathing Underwater - Shallow Water

Goal: The swimmer stands in the water and moves his or her arms in a circular motion, with both arms moving simultaneously. The swimmer keeps his or her face in the water, and he or she comes out of the water to take a breath after one full circular motion is completed.

Formation: The instructor can stand in front of swimmer and model the exercise.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to make complete circles simultaneously with both arms and in sync with his or her inhalations.

43. Arm Circles (Hip Hold) - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer is horizontal in the water and moves his or her arms in a circular motion, while the instructor is using a hip hold.

Formation: The instructor can stand beside the swimmer and hold the swimmer by his or her hips. The swimmer is in deeper water where he or she cannot stand.

Strategies: Model the exercise, and use the Counting Strategy to count the number of arm circles and breaths expected for the swimmer to complete.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to maintain a horizontal position. The swimmer also needs to make complete circles simultaneously with both arms.

44. Arm Circles with Breathing Underwater (Hip Hold) - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer is horizontal in the water and moves his or her arms in a circular motion and taking breaths while the instructor is using a hip hold.

Formation: The instructor can stand beside the swimmer and hold the swimmer by the hips. If necessary, the instructor can support the swimmer using physical prompts both above and under the water. The swimmer is in deeper water where he or she cannot stand

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy or Go and Touch Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to maintain a horizontal position.

45. Arm Circles with Breathing Under Water (Faded Hip Hold) - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer is horizontal in the water and moves his or her arms in a circular motion and taking breaths while the instructor is "fading" his or her hold of the swimmer's hips.

Formation: The instructor can stand beside the swimmer and hold the swimmer by the hips. The instructor should "fade" his or her hold on the swimmer's hips by starting with two hands and then gradually using fingertips. The swimmer is in deeper water where he or she cannot stand.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy or Go and Touch Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to maintain a horizontal position. Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her mouth closed and does not swallow water.

46. Rocket Push Off Wall to Adult - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer is in the rocket position on the wall and the instructor is a couple feet away from the swimmer. The swimmer pushes off the wall and his or her momentum pushes the swimmer into the instructor's arms.

Formation: The swimmer's knees are bent on the wall with his or her arms stretched out along the wall, while facing the instructor. The swimmer should be in deeper water that he or she cannot stand in, and the instructor is a couple feet away.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use armpit hold initially, if necessary. The instructor can reach his or her arms out to decrease the amount of distance between the instructor and swimmer.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer's body needs to maintain a horizontal position. Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her mouth closed and does not swallow water.

47. Rocket Push Off Wall to Adult Using Arm Circles and Breathing Underwater - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer is in the rocket position on the wall and the instructor is a couple feet away from the swimmer. The swimmer pushes off the wall while moving his or her arms in a circular motion and taking breaths in between motions.

Formation: The swimmer's knees are bent on the wall with his or her arms stretched out along the wall while facing the instructor. The swimmer is in deeper water that he or she cannot stand in, and the instructor is a couple feet away.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy. If the swimmer's body becomes vertical while swimming towards the instructor, the instructor can use his or her hands, on either the swimmer's stomach or hips, to guide the swimmer's body to a horizontal position.

What to Watch Out For: The swimmer needs to maintain a horizontal position. Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her mouth closed and does not swallow water.

Level 12

Level 12 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to jump into the pool, submerge his or her head, and swim to the instructor.

48. Jump In and Go Under (Adult Catch) - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer jumps into the pool and the instructor catches the swimmer as the swimmer goes under the water.

Formation: The swimmer is standing on the edge of the pool and the instructor is standing in the water. The swimmer jumps into the pool and his or her head is submerged in the water. The swimmer is in deeper water that he or she cannot stand in.

Strategies: Model the exercise. If the swimmer is nervous, hold hands with the swimmer as he or she jumps into the pool.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer's head is submerged in the water. Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her mouth closed and does not swallow water.

49. Jump In and "Swim" or Doggy Paddle to Adult - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer jumps into the pool and the instructor is a short distance away from the swimmer. The swimmer moves his or her arms and kicks his or her feet as he or she swims to the instructor. The instructor should gradually increase the swimming distance expected from the swimmer. The swimmer swims the best way he or she can by themselves towards the instructor, who does not stress form with the swimmer.

Formation: The swimmer is standing on the edge of the pool, and the instructor is in the water. The swimmer jumps into the pool and swims to the instructor, while moving his or her arms and kicking his or her feet. The swimmer needs to be in a depth at which he or she cannot stand.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use verbal prompts, such as, "Kick your feet" and "Make your arm circles." Use consistency with language by repeating the same verbal prompts that were used previously.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer's head is submerged in the water. Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her mouth closed and does not swallow water.

Level 13

Level 13 is designed to teach the swimmer how to dive down in the water to retrieve an object.

50. Go Underwater to Retrieve an Object - Shallow Water

Goal: The swimmer goes under the water to retrieve an object at the bottom of the pool in a depth at which the swimmer can easily stand.

Formation: The swimmer goes under the water and picks up the object. If necessary, the instructor can push down on the swimmer's back while the swimmer retrieves the object underwater.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use an object or toy that is preferred by the swimmer. Start in shallow water, either at 2 feet or on the stairs.

What to Watch Out For: Before giving the swimmer a push while the swimmer retrieves the object, be sure to tell the swimmer, "I am going to give you a push," or "I am going to help you."

51. Go Underwater to Retrieve an Object (Adult Push) - Deep Water

Goal: The swimmer goes under the water to retrieve an object at the bottom of the pool in a depth at which the swimmer cannot stand.

Formation: The swimmer goes under the water and picks up the object. If necessary, the instructor can push down on the swimmer's back while the swimmer retrieves the object underwater.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use an object or toy that is preferred by the swimmer.

What to Watch Out For: Before giving the swimmer a push while the swimmer retrieves the object, be sure to tell the swimmer, "I am going to give you a push," or "I am going to help you." It is acceptable for the swimmer to be unable to retrieve the object. However, gradually increase the depth of water expected from the swimmer, as the swimmer's skills will improve as he or she becomes more comfortable with diving.

Level 14

Level 14 is designed to teach the swimmer how to use momentum to swim on his or her back. The swimmer will learn how to move his or her arms in a backstroke motion and kick his or her legs.

52. Rocket Push Off the Wall on Back (Adult Support)

Goal: The swimmer pushes off the wall on his or her back while the instructor supports his or her back.

Formation: The swimmer is facing the wall with his or her knees bent and hands holding onto the wall. The instructor is behind the swimmer, with one hand on the back of the swimmer's head and the other hand on the swimmer's lower back.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use verbal prompts, such as, "We are going to do a rocket push off the wall and float on our backs," or "I want you to look at the sky (or ceiling)."

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer maintains a horizontal position on his or her back during the rocket push and does not go under the water. The instructor should keep the swimmer above water using his or her hands.

53. Rocket Push Off Wall on Back (Faded Adult Support)

Goal: The swimmer pushes off the wall on his or her back while the instructor "fades" support of his or her back.

Formation: The swimmer is facing the wall with his or her knees bent and hands holding onto the wall. The instructor is behind the swimmer and gradually "fades" support of one hand on the back of the swimmer's head and the other hand on the swimmer's back. The amount of head support or back support will depend on the angle at which the swimmer's body is sinking. The instructor will "fade" his or her support as the swimmer is able to push off the wall and keep his or her body afloat.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use verbal prompts, such as, "We are going to do a rocket push off the wall and float on our backs," or "I want you to look at the sky (or ceiling)."

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer maintains a horizontal position on his or her back during the rocket push and does not go under the water.

54. Back Float with Backstroke Arm Motion (Adult Support and Physical Prompt)

Goal: The swimmer floats on his or her back while the instructor is physically prompting backstroke arm motions.

Formation: The swimmer is floating on his or her back while the instructor is physically guiding his or her arms in a circular motion. The swimmer's arms should move one at a time, and each arm should stay straight and touch the swimmer's ear with each completed motion.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her arms straight as his or her body stays afloat.

55. Back Float (Faded Adult Support)

Goal: The swimmer floats on his or her back, while the instructor "fades" his or her physical prompts as the swimmer is more comfortable with the backstroke arm motions.

Formation: The swimmer is floating on his or her back while the instructor is physically prompting his or her arms in a circular motion. The swimmer's arms should move one at a time, and each arm should stay straight and touch the swimmer's ear with each completed motion. The instructor will gradually "fade" his or her support.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her arms straight as his or her body stays afloat.

56. Rocket Push Off Wall into Backstroke Without Kicking Legs

Goal: The swimmer pushes off the wall on his or her back into moving his or her arms in backstroke arm motions.

Formation: The swimmer is facing the wall with his or her knees bent and hands holding onto the wall. The instructor is beside the swimmer, and if necessary, may provide physical prompts on the swimmer's lower back to keep him or her in a horizontal position and above water.

Strategies: Model the exercise and use the Count Strategy.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her arms straight out as his or her body stays afloat.

57. Rocket Push Off Wall into Backstroke With Kicking Legs

Goal: The swimmer pushes off the wall on his or her back into the backstroke, while moving arms and kicking legs.

Formation: The swimmer is facing the wall with his or her knees bent and hands holding onto the wall. The instructor is beside the swimmer, and if necessary, may provide physical prompts on the swimmer's lower back to keep him or her in a horizontal position and above the water.

Strategies: Model the exercise, use the Count Strategy, and use the verbal prompt, "Kick your legs."

What to Watch Out For: Be sure the swimmer keeps his or her arms straight out while his or her body stays afloat.

Level 15

Level 15 is designed for the swimmer to learn how to jump into deep water and swim to the side.

58. Jump Off Diving Board (Adult Catch)

Goal: The swimmer jumps off the diving board and the instructor catches swimmer. (Ask lifeguards before attempting to do this.)

Formation: The swimmer jumps off the diving board while the instructor is treading water, with arms extended upwards to catch the swimmer.

Strategies: Model jumping off the diving board and use verbal prompts, such as, "I am going to catch you! You can do it!"

What to Watch Out For: Most pools do not allow this; however, when asked for permission, most lifeguards will give consent.

59. Jump Off Diving Board (Adult on Side or Ladder)

Goal: The swimmer jumps off the diving board and the instructor is in the pool beside the ladder. (Ask lifeguards before attempting to do this.)

Formation: The swimmer jumps off the diving board while the instructor is beside the ladder, reaching out to the swimmer

Strategies: Model jumping off the diving board and swimming to the side. The instructor should reach for the swimmer in order to show the swimmer that he or she is not far away. If the space allocated for diving is large, the instructor may tread water halfway between the diving board and ladder, while gradually increasing the distance between himself or herself and the swimmer.

What to Watch Out For: Most pools do not allow this; however, when asked for permission, most lifeguards will give consent.

60. Jump Off Diving Board

Goal: The swimmer jumps into deep water and swims safely to the side without the instructor's support.

Formation: The swimmer jumps off the diving board and into the water, and then he or she swims to the side of the pool. (The swimming formation is not important as long as the swimmer is comfortable and is able to swim to the side.)

Strategies: Model jumping off the diving board and swimming to the side of the pool.

What to Watch Out For: Be sure to encourage the swimmer to jump off the front of the diving board, rather than off the side.

Dictionary

Terminology

Horizontal	The swimmer's body is in a laying down position in the water
Model	The instructor shows the swimmer what to motion/position their body needs to be in to complete the correct motion
Negative Association	A child has a negative experience with an activity/place/item that causes the child to react in an inappropriate way the next time the child is exposed to the activity/place/item
Pair/Pairing	Using favorite food/toys/games/actions that the child likes when introducing a new environment or new activity to the child
Physical Prompt	The instructor is physically moving/touching the swimmer's body
Reinforce	The action of giving the reinforcer to the child.
Reinforcer	An toy/food item/activity/action/verbal praise (Good Job, Awesome) that the child enjoys that will change their behavior. For example the child loves to sing a specific song so the instructor would tell the child first we are going to kick our legs 10 times and then we will sing "Wheels on the bus." Every child has different reinforcers
Swaying	Moving the swimmer's body side to side
Verbal Prompt	The instructor is talking using short phrases to remind the swimmer on the position/movement they need to do in order to complete the correct motion
Vertical	The swimmer's body is up and down in a standing position in the water
Visual Schedule	A single picture describing what the swimmer needs to do. Usually the schedule is in a list form and there are several single pictures that make up the schedule
With Support	The instructor is physically touching the swimmer's body and moving their body in the correct motion
Without Support	The instructor is not physically touching the swimmer's body and the swimmer is moving their body by themselves.

Water Safety Phrases

"Arms out like a T"	Arms are straight and stretch out to the side; the swimmer's arms should be in the letter T shape.
"Count Strategy"	The instructor tells the swimmer how many times the swimmer needs to perform the action/movement. For example "You need to do 5 arm circles" or "You need to do 8 kicks."
"Go and Touch Strategy"	The instructor tells the swimmer that the swimmer needs to go and touch an item in and around the pool. The item can be something the swimmer likes such as a toy or the item can be the numbers on the wall. Most pools have numbers that represent the depth in the pool. The strategy is used to motivate the swimmer to move around the pool.
"Look at the Sky"	The swimmer is horizontal floating on his back with their head up looking at the sky or ceiling
"Make a big Stomach"	The swimmer inhales a deep breath of air so the swimmer's stomach expands.
"Rocket Push"	The swimmer is in the water with their legs on the wall and their arms are stretched out holding the sides of the pool. The swimmer bends their knees and pushes off the wall using their momentum to glide in the water.
"Stretch out like Superman"	The swimmer's body is in the horizontal (laying down position) with arms stretched out straight above the swimmer's head and legs are stretched out straight.
"Try and get me wet"	The swimmer is kicking the water hard enough to make a the water splash and get the instructor wet