

A close-up photograph of a baby's hand reaching out of a pool of water. The water is a vibrant turquoise color. The baby's skin is wet and glistening. In the background, a purple patterned towel or blanket is visible. Overlaid on the image is a white circle with a sunburst effect of thin white lines radiating outwards. Inside the circle, the text "Happy Swimming" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. "Happy" is in purple and "Swimming" is in blue.

**Happy
Swimming**

What Every Swim Parent Should Know

What a gift! The gift of water confidence and learning to swim. Together let's unpack a few questions you may have for your swim journey.

Develop • learn • explore

when will my child learn to swim?

This is often the number one parent question, however such a difficult one to really know, as learning to swim will take time, like walking, talking, reading and other developmental skills. But the speed of learning to swim can be accelerated by regular practice, lots of encouragement and in an environment that feels safe and is fun to learn in.

Slowly, gently, positively

Children learn best in a nurturing swim environment. Whilst learning water safety is so important, no child should have to be conditioned to self-survive in the water. The impact of trauma on the developing sensitive brain can last a lifetime. We believe in teaching water safety **free from force**.

when will we dunk?

Learning to explore the underwater world and being comfortable with putting your face in the water, are both swim triumphs. It goes without saying, no baby or young child should be 'dunked' under the water in the learn to swim process. However, there are practices at the pool and at home that can really help to acclimatise your child in water.



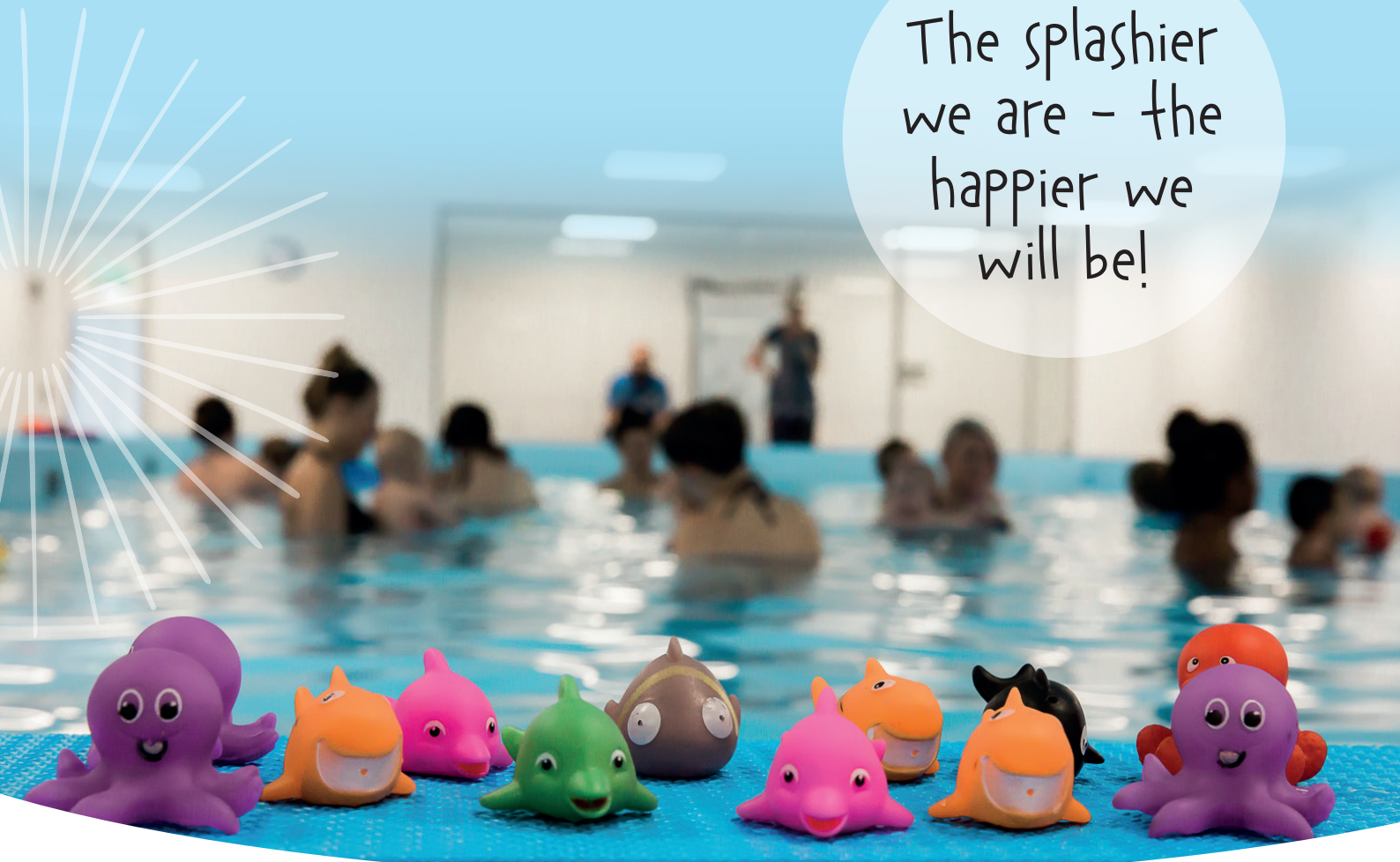
Simple sprinkles:

There is no rush, babies will enjoy simply floating, relaxing and being with you in the water first. When they are comfortable and used to the water, start to play with the water. Make splashes and simple sprinkles on hands and feet, before moving to water sprinkling to the back of the head. Give your child a verbal cue in preparation, allow a little water to wash down the face, observe their reaction, and re-enforce with positive praise or reassurance, to meet their needs.

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Enjoy playing peekaboo together, chins in, noses in, faces in, bobbing down. As humans we learn from the people around us, when you are relaxed and enjoying the water, your child will learn to enjoy the water through you too. (Bring a swim hat and/or goggles if needed, so you are ready to explore the underwater world with your child.)

The splashier
we are - the
happier we
will be!



Repeat, repeat – again, again!

Babies and young children need repetition to strengthen their neural connections in the brain and make skills permanent. From your point of view, your child might seem to 'just' be playing with a ball in the water. What might seem slow and boring to us adults, is in fact your child learning and exploring.

Are you ready to wait, watch and wonder at all the amazing developmental skills your child is learning in the water? Let's take a simple cup. Manipulating the cup and water flow helps refine fine motor skills. Seeing and hearing the water cascade, feeling the pressure on different body parts stimulates their auditory, visual and proprioceptive senses at the same time. As water provides minimal gravity there is more opportunity to move in different ways than on dry land, activating the vestibular sense, challenging core stability and balance.

Water play can be the foundation of learning to swim.



Parent power

Parenting power means not giving up and staying curious in the learn to swim journey. Like everything in life, there will be ebs and flows, times of fast learning and times of pause. Your power is there, to support them, with every splash, swoosh, and swim.

When we view learning as a journey, meeting their needs at every stage, we start to enjoy ALL the stages, because an amazing amount of emotional energy goes into learning to swim.

Your child will learn...

- **How to negotiate risks, jumping into the water.**
- **That it is ok to try and to make mistakes.**
- **That the magic can happen when they swim outside their comfort zone.**
- **That swimming can provide your child with all the ingredients they need to thrive in life.**



It shouldn't matter
how slowly a child learns as
long as we are encouraging
them not to stop.

Robert John Meehan

