



RECREATION
CITY OF GREELEY

Building Belonging: Attracting and Retaining Multicultural Swimmers in Your Lesson Program

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City of Greeley, Colorado

What's My Background?

- LGIT, WSIT, Swim Angelfish Adaptive
- 30+ years working in aquatics instruction
- 30+ years in marketing, PR & community engagement
- Masters of Business Administration
- Recreation Coordinator in Aquatics

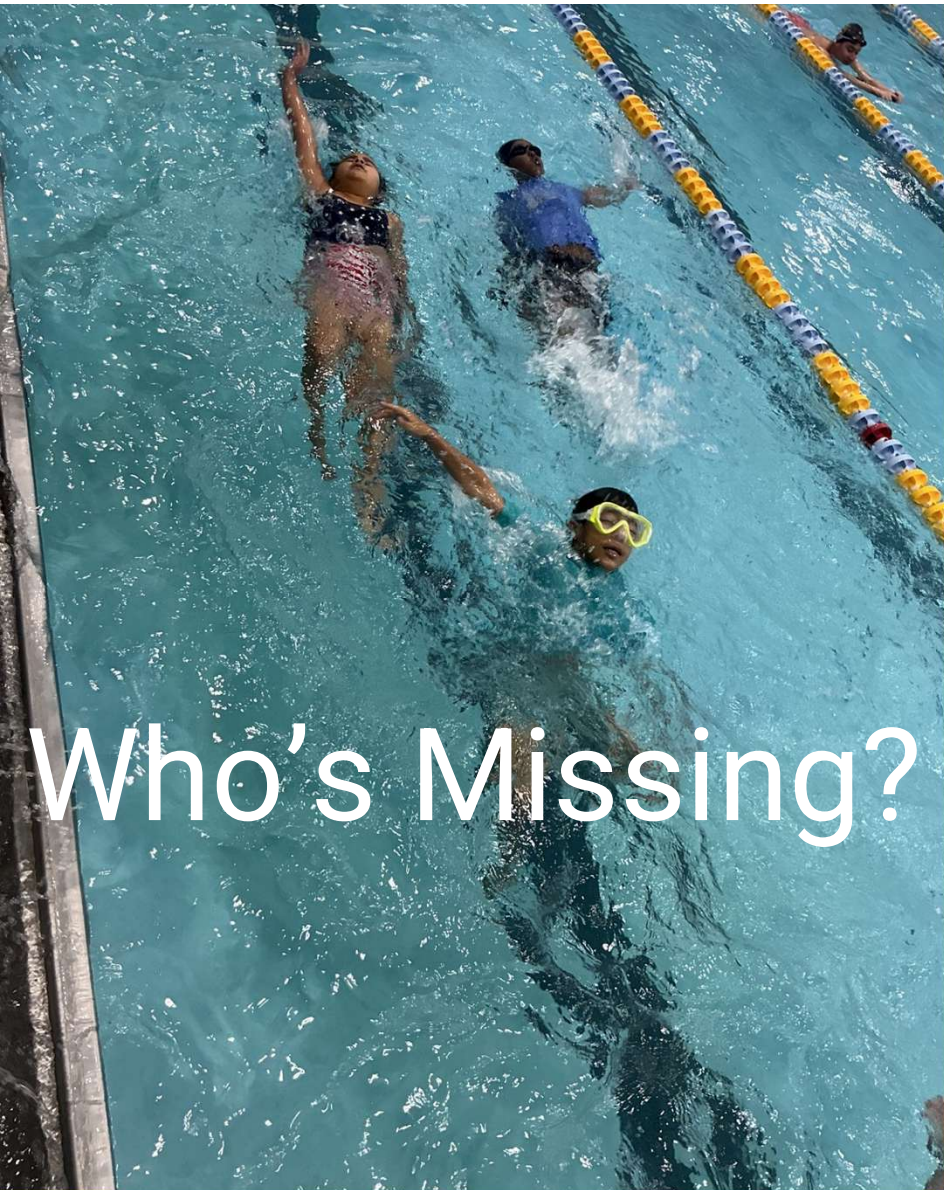


Where Is Greeley?

- Part of Front Range Urban Corridor
- Northern Colorado city with 116,000 residents
- Bedroom community of Denver
- Major industries include agriculture & food processing, energy, aerospace, and healthcare
- Ethnicity includes 52% White, 41% Hispanic, 2% Black, 1% Asian

Who Is City Of Greeley CPRD Aquatics?

- Employ 4 full time employees
- Operate 2 outdoor pools, 2 indoor pools, 2 splash pads
- Work with more than 125 part-time employees
- Taught 750 swimming lesson classes in 2025
- Enrolled 3422 swimmers



Think about your current swim lesson participants. Who is NOT represented – and why might that be?

A. Which communities are absent?

B. What assumptions might your program be making about families?

C. Which barriers feel MOST real at your pool?

A young boy with dark hair is smiling and looking towards the camera while in a swimming pool. He is wearing a dark-colored swimsuit. The water is clear and blue. There are several blue inflatable floats around him, and some white floats are visible in the bottom left corner.

SHARE?

A. Which communities are absent?

B. What assumptions might your program be making about families?

C. Which barriers feel **MOST** real at your pool?



Learning Objectives

1. Identify cultural and social barriers that impact participation in swim lessons for multicultural communities.
2. Apply inclusive marketing strategies and outreach techniques to effectively engage multicultural swimmers in aquatic programming.
3. Implement retention practices and program adaptations that foster a welcoming environment and encourage long-term participation.

A photograph of a woman with her eyes closed, smiling warmly as she holds a young child in a swimming pool. The child is wearing a colorful, patterned swimsuit and is also smiling. The background is a blurred outdoor pool setting.

Our Challenges

We needed to identify who was not enrolled

Participation gaps existed and we didn't make changes

We were not seeing barriers nor solutions

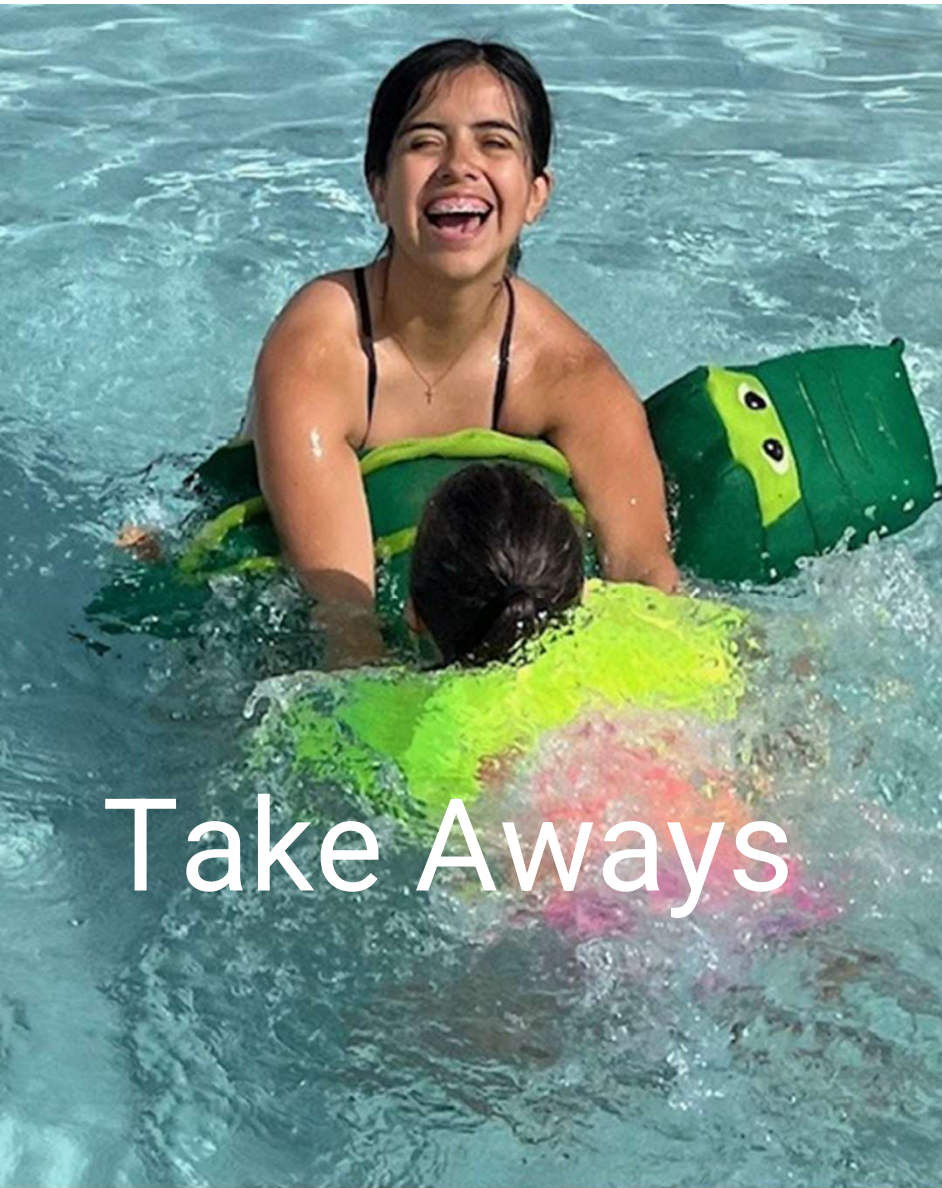


Our Focus

Create a safe,
trustworthy environment

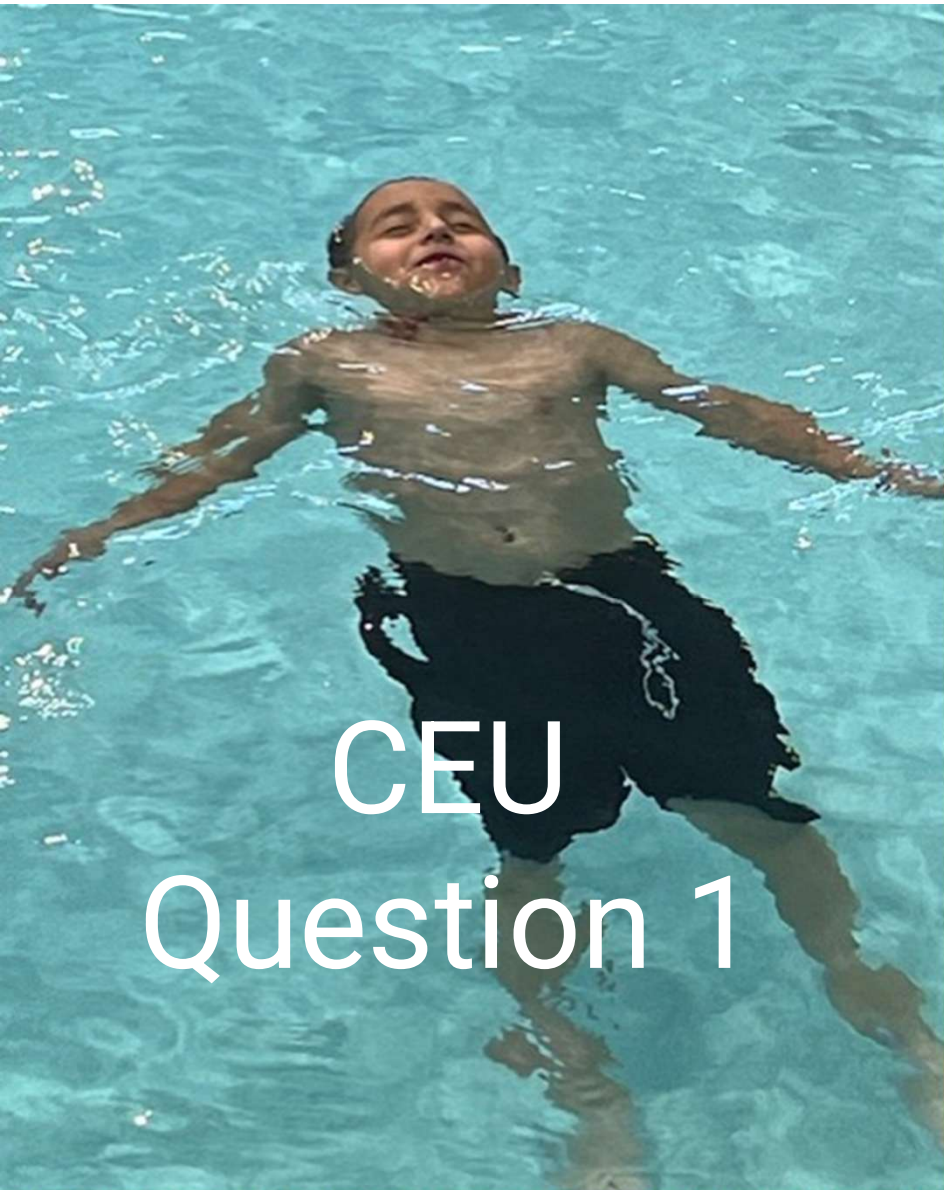
Provide access to every
community

Programs must be
intentionally inclusive



Take Aways

- Proven marketing tools tailored to reach diverse communities
- Insight into cultural and social barriers to participation
- Inclusive practices that support retention and family engagement



CEU Question 1

- True or False: One learning objective is to identify the cultural and social barriers that impact participation in swim lessons for multicultural communities.

Centers for Disease Control

Fact 1

Unintentional drowning causes 4000 deaths per year in US

Fact 2

Leading cause of death children ages 1-4

Fact 3

Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native and non-Hispanic black persons highest drowning rates compared to other groups

Fact 4

In recent years drowning rates increased especially among children and black populations

Understanding the Why:

Drowning Rates and Risks

Swim competency is a preventative tool. Without access to lessons and water safety drowning risk remains high

Lack of Swim Lesson Participation in Adults

55% US adults never took swim lesson.
40 million US adults do not know how to swim.
72% Hispanic adults & 63% Black adults have never taken lessons

Exposure without Ability

51% Adults spent time at pool in last 6 months, but lack the skills and training to swim

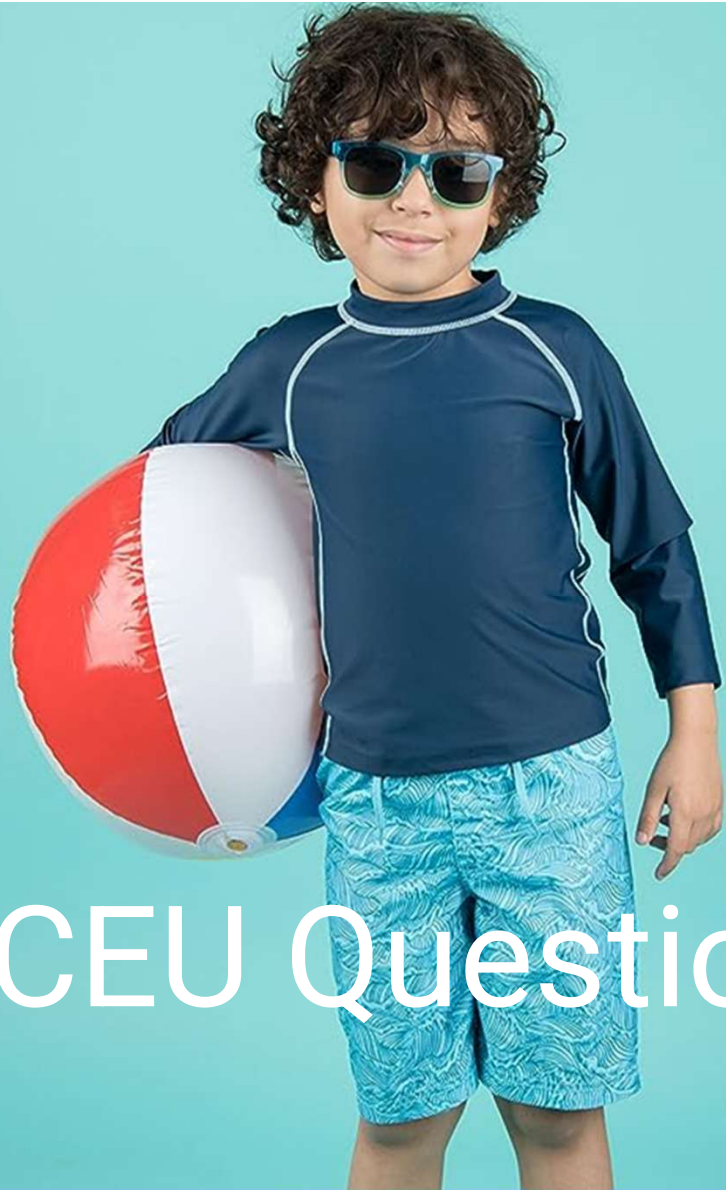
Representation in Aquatics:

Social & Structural Barriers Impact Skill

Inequitable access to pools limits opportunities for some racial and ethnic groups.

Culturally responsive outreach and inclusive programming

Disparities in participation not random. Correlation with race, ethnicity and structural barriers.



CEU Question 2

- True or False: Financial barriers continue to be a challenge for multicultural families.

Barriers to Participation

- Why aren't they coming or staying?

Fear of Water and
Generational Trauma

Cost, transportation,
scheduling

Language,
Communication
Religious and Cultural
Considerations

Scholarships



Youth Assistance United
Way

Active Adult Center

Phillips 66

Step Into Swim Foundation

Reframing Outreach

TRUST

Community Partners
Matter

Word of Mouth is
Powerful

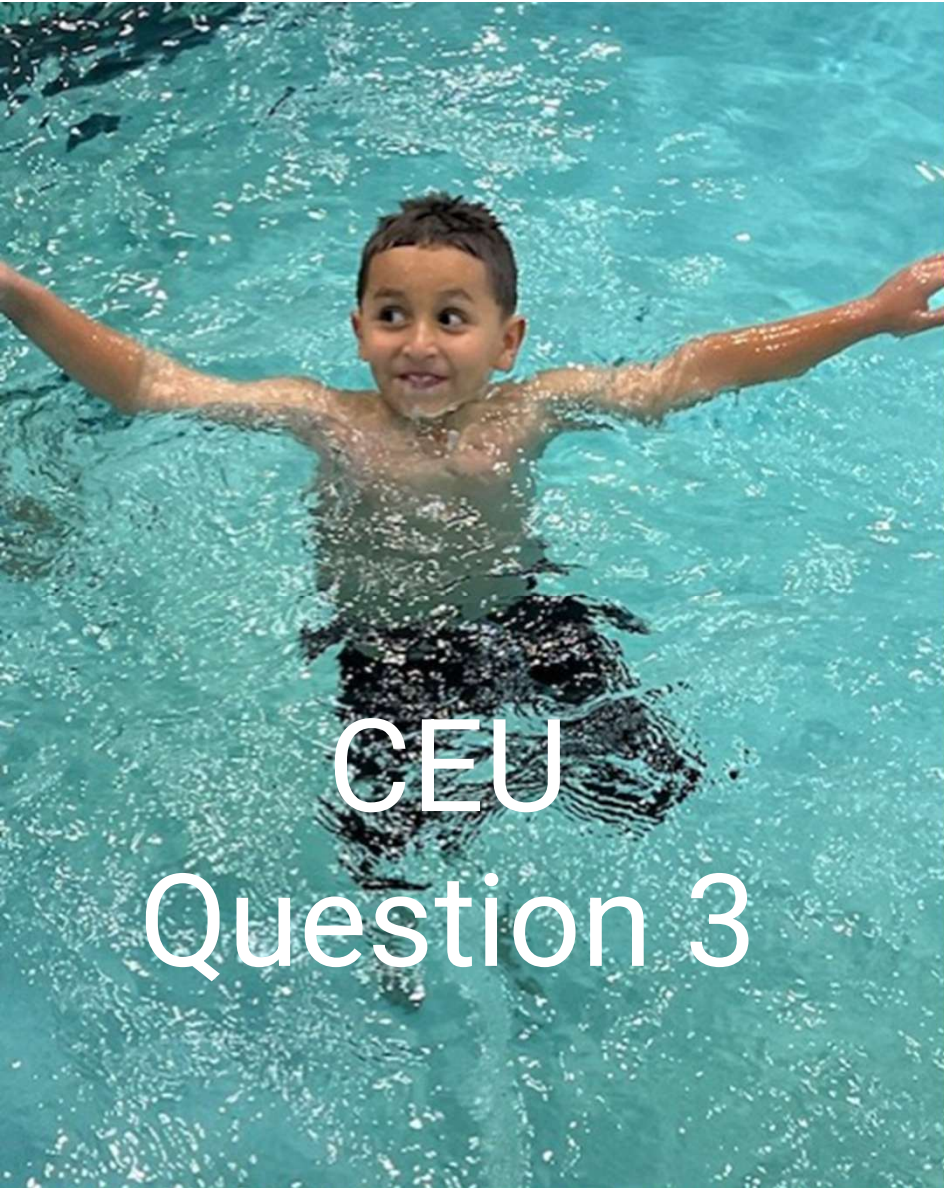
Inclusive Marketing

How to build
trust in your
community?

Images Reflect REAL
Families

Messaging focuses on
Safety and Confidence

Clear Expectations Build
Comfort



CEU Question 3

- True or False: The learning objectives include a focus on applying exclusive marketing strategies to engage multicultural swimmers.

From Flyer to Trust

If a family does not trust your organization, what would convince them to try swimming lessons?



From Flyer to Trust

1. Who do families trust in your community?
2. Where could outreach happen outside of your facility?
3. What messages would reduce fear or uncertainty?





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From Flyer to Trust

1. Who do families trust in your community?



From Flyer to Trust

Where could outreach happen outside of your facility?



Dream Team

Each instructor was a great fit for our community groups.



Penelope

Moved to Colorado from Ecuador. WSI who is trilingual. Teaching lessons in Spanish. Loves working with adults.



Lukas

Moved to CO from Ecuador. WSI who is trilingual. College student focusing on teaching younger swimmers in Spanish.



Jane

Tenured instructor who enjoys working with adults and adaptive swimmers. Worked with our community of Muslim women and African men.



Rahman

Newer instructor who likes working with younger swimmers. Learning strokes himself as well.

From Flyer to Trust

What messages would reduce fear or uncertainty?



Clases de Natación ¡En Español!

Sábados

Edades:
6 meses - 6 años, y adultos 16+

Lugar: Family FunPlex

Parent/Tot 1 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Una clase divertida y de apoyo para pequeños nadadores entre 6 meses a 1.5 años. ¡Padres y bebés nadan y aprenden a ser seguros en el agua juntos!

Preschool 2 9:35 - 10:05 a.m.

Para niños desde los 4 años. Los niños desarrollan confianza en el agua y aprenden habilidades esenciales para ser más seguros en el agua a través de actividades dinámicas y muchos juegos.

Preschool 1 10:10 - 10:40 a.m.

Para niños de 2 a 4 años. Una introducción a nadar, aprendemos a estar cómodos en el agua, cantando, juegos y actividades para poder desarrollar habilidades básicas en la piscina.

Adult Basics 10:45 - 11:30 a.m.

¡Nunca es tarde para aprender a nadar! Esta clase es dictada para adultos 16+ aprendemos a desarrollar confianza, seguridad y habilidades fundamentales de la natación.

¡Regístrate en línea o
escanea aquí!



Saturdays

Ages:
6 months - 6 years, and 16+

Location: Family FunPlex

Parent/Tot 1 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.

A fun and supportive class for little swimmers 6 months - 1.5 years. Parents join in the water to learn safe skills together!

Preschool 2 9:35 - 10:05 a.m.

For swimmers age 4+. Kids build confidence and learn key water safety skills through engaging, playful activities.

Preschool 1 10:10 - 10:40 a.m.

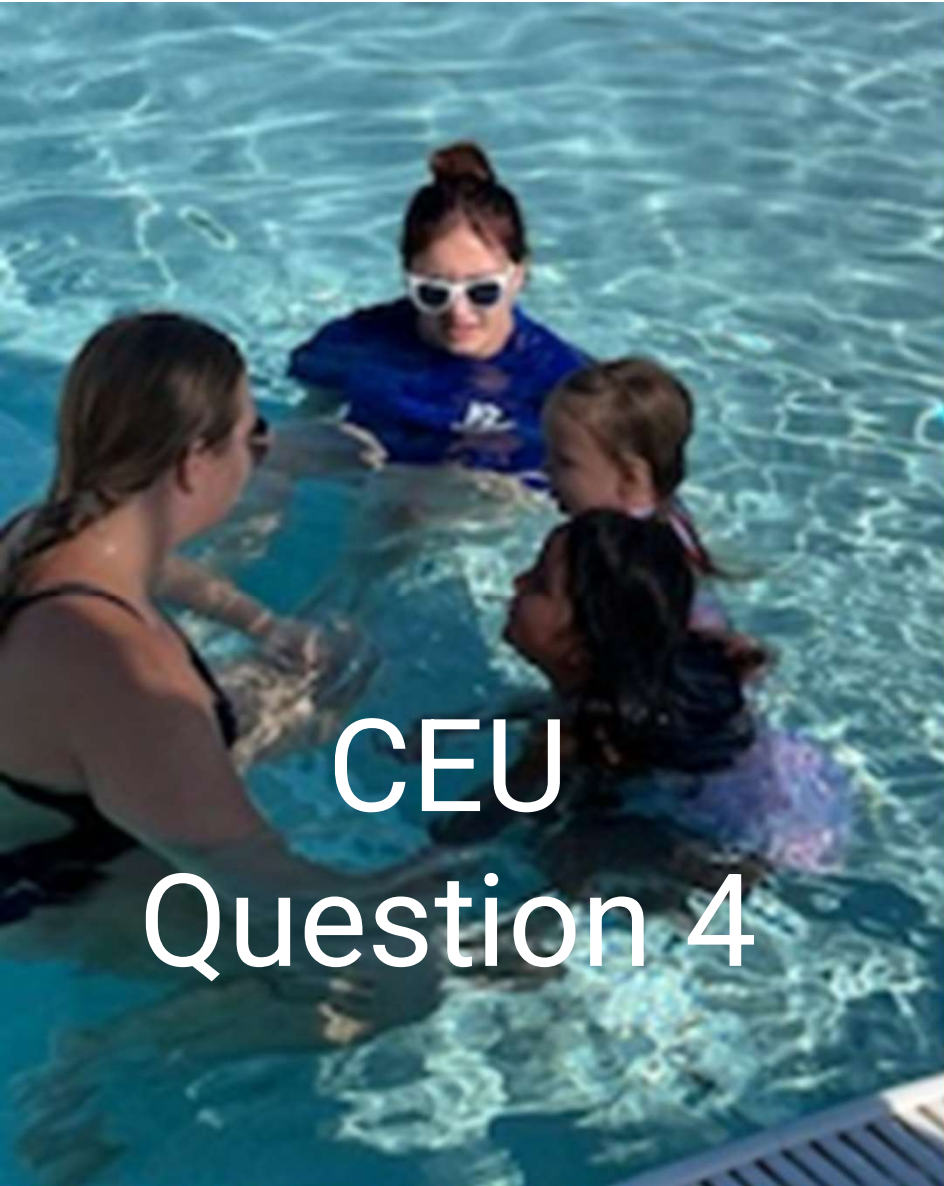
For children ages 2-4. An introduction to the water using songs, games, and hands-on play to build comfort and basic skills.

Adult Basics 10:45 - 11:30 a.m.

It's never too late to learn! This class supports adults 16+ in building confidence, safety, and foundational swimming skills.

Register online or
Scan Here!





CEU Question 4

- True or False: A key objective is to implement retention practices and program adaptation that foster a welcoming environment.

Strategies for Cultural Relevant Outreach

Outreach is relational not promotional.

Collaborate with community partners, schools, cultural orgs, faith communities

Hire from within

Representation matters



Creating Programs that Welcome Swimmers

Flexible swimwear policies

Orientations reduce anxiety

Gender-neutral changing station

Translation support

An indoor swimming pool area with a vibrant ocean-themed mural on the wall. The mural features a large sea turtle, a clownfish, and various coral reefs. To the right, there is a yellow and red playground structure. In the foreground, there are several tables and chairs around the pool. The pool water is clear blue, and the overall atmosphere is bright and colorful.

Creating Programs that Retain Swimmers

First-day experience

Consistent instructors

Community-building within lessons

Follow-up touchpoints with families



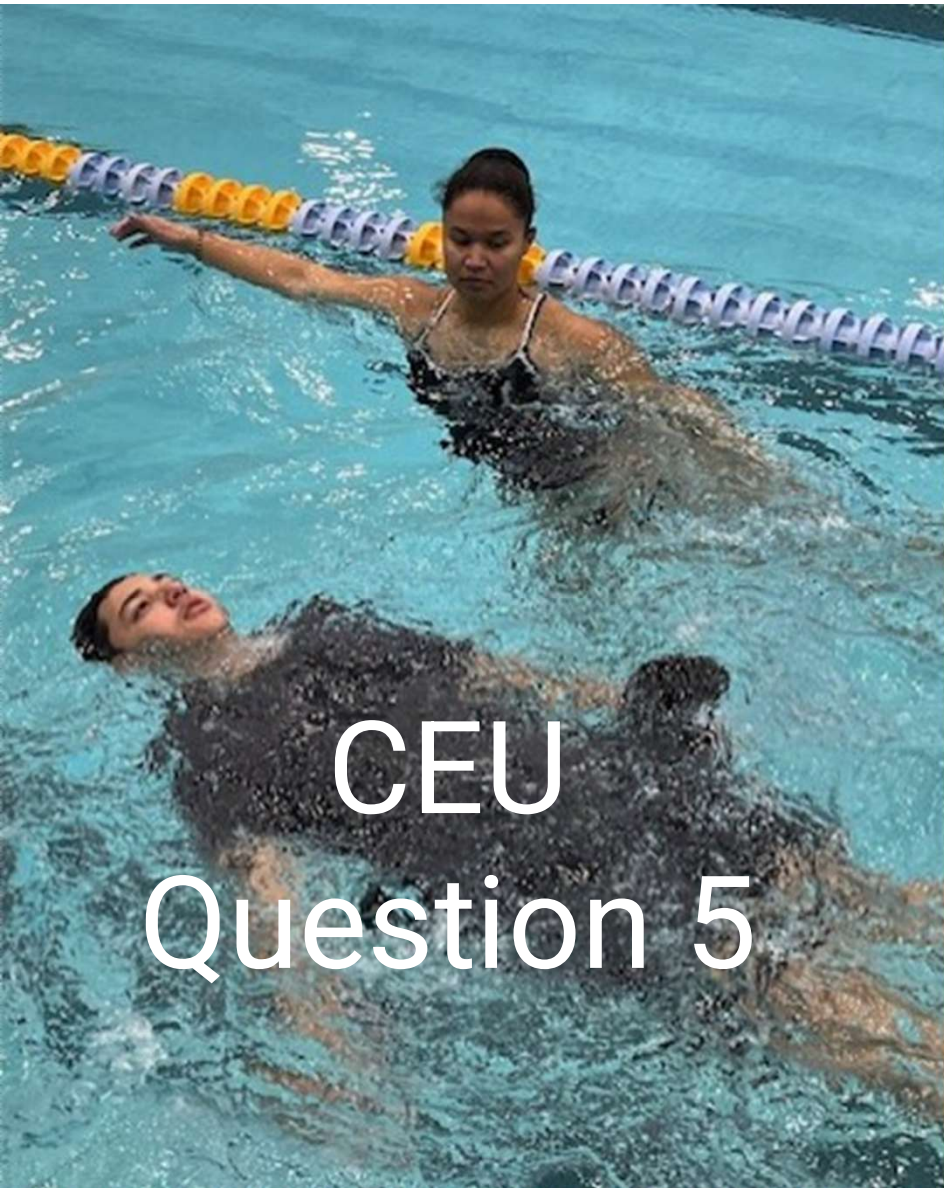
What are staff practices that build trust?

Correct name pronunciation

Show and Tell

Explain the “Why” behind rules

Normalize fear and questions



CEU Question 5

- True or False: The objectives only cover identifying barriers and do not address outreach techniques.

What communities do you want to serve?





CEU Question 6

- True or False: The learning objectives include implementing program adaptations that are intended to encourage long term participation.

Retention and Family Engagement

Consistency Builds Relationships

Progress Updates Engage Families

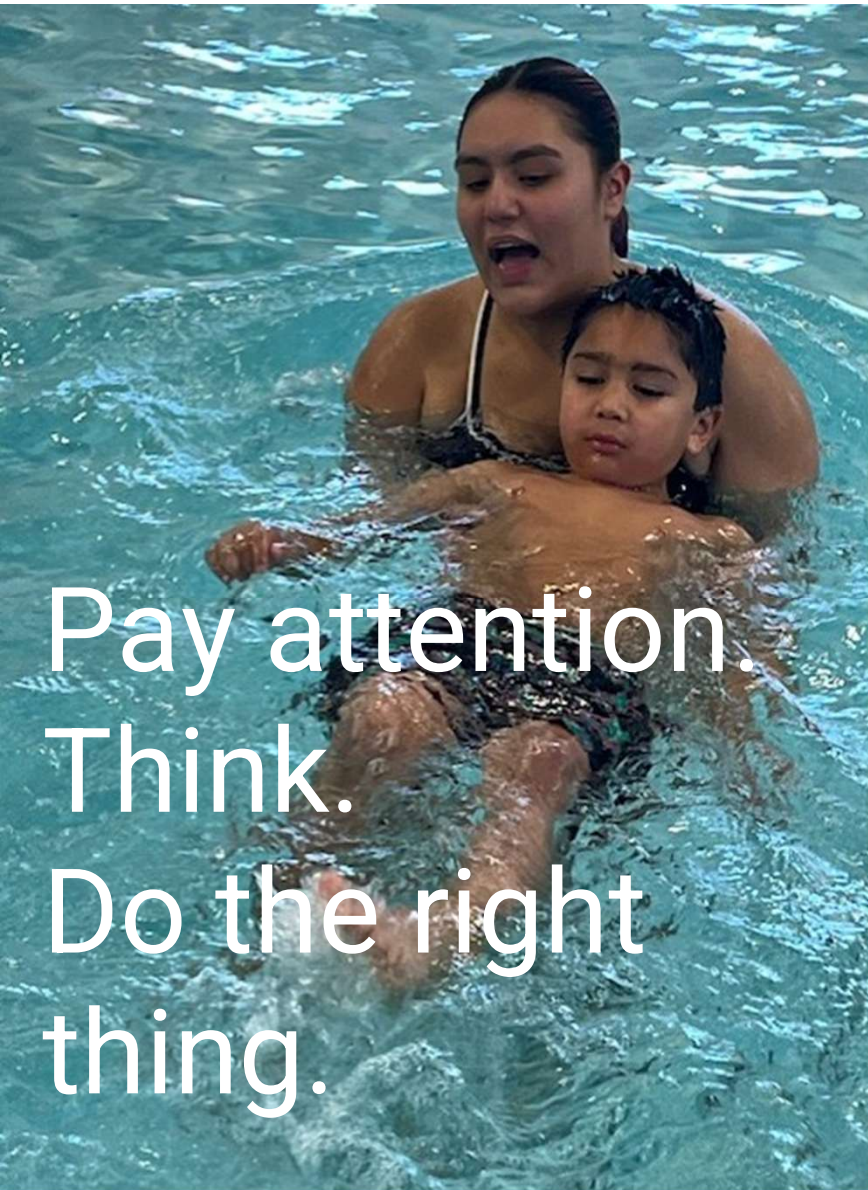
Celebrate Milestones

Retention and Family Engagement

Scholarships for Family

Clear Next step pathways
Use Follow-up Surveys

Communication Matters



Pay attention.
Think.
Do the right
thing.

- A. What would make you come back as a parent?
- B. When do families typically drop off?
- C. What makes family feel known or remembered?
- D. How do you communicate progress?

Outreach Toolbox

- Family photo shoots
- Find scholarships
- Translate progress cards
- Use Spanish Whales Tales
- Host information tables
- Teach class on site

Download Marketing

- Newsletter
- Progress Card
- Social Media Posts
- Parent Survey
- Emails parents



YOUR Action Plan

One thing to
START

One thing to
IMPROVE

One thing to
STOP



QUESTIONS?



RECREATION
CITY OF GREELEY

Thank you for your attending

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