

Children cry in lessons because we are teaching them something completely new and the instructor is new. The child is going to be more comfortable with mom or dad, but *parents do not typically know how to teach these skills*. You first need to **give your child a chance to bond with the instructor**. The more your child trusts the instructor, the more willing they will be to try out new things, like putting their head under, holding on without being held, and lying still on their back. These are the skills which are going to keep them safe if they get into the water alone. *Please be patient*. Try to see how you would feel if someone asked you to lie on your back in the water even if they are holding you. To a child it appears that you can fall down in the water. We as adults know that this really doesn't happen as long as you have air in your lungs but children do not know this. It may, in fact, seem like magic! Of course we cannot explain this concept of buoyancy to a child, we have to show them. So give them time and **in a few weeks to a month your child will swim unassisted and grab the side and try to float by themselves**. It will not traumatize them. In fact the opposite is true! They become more and more confident as time goes on until they can practice everything they learned at home. It happens to a new group of kids every year and after a few seasons of swim lessons most parents brag about how much more accomplished their kids are than children who take traditional swim lessons and are never challenged to do anything new.

By definition, to teach something you must take a child out of his comfort zone and practice something they have never done before. Try substituting a skill such as walking, or tying your shoes, one that doesn't have the same emotional connotations,

and you can see that the same bias isn't usually held. Instead we cheer and are thrilled. Most people remember something about their swim lessons. If what you remember is positive, you will probably have the same reactions to your child and swim lessons. But if it was negative, like if you were thrown in or had a mean teacher, the association will be negative. Again, give your child time to adjust, and **offer a lot of encouragement and praise**. Swimming is a hard skill to learn and usually the most emotionally laden thing in a young child's life up to that point. You and your child will get there. **Thank you!**

Bev Steinfink, RN

Certifying Instructor, Infant Aquatics

Dallas Infant Aquatics

214 890-SWIM

www.infantaquatics.com

aquatots@me.com